

BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2004



TOMMY HANNEFORD

presents

The World's
Most Famous
Circus
Family



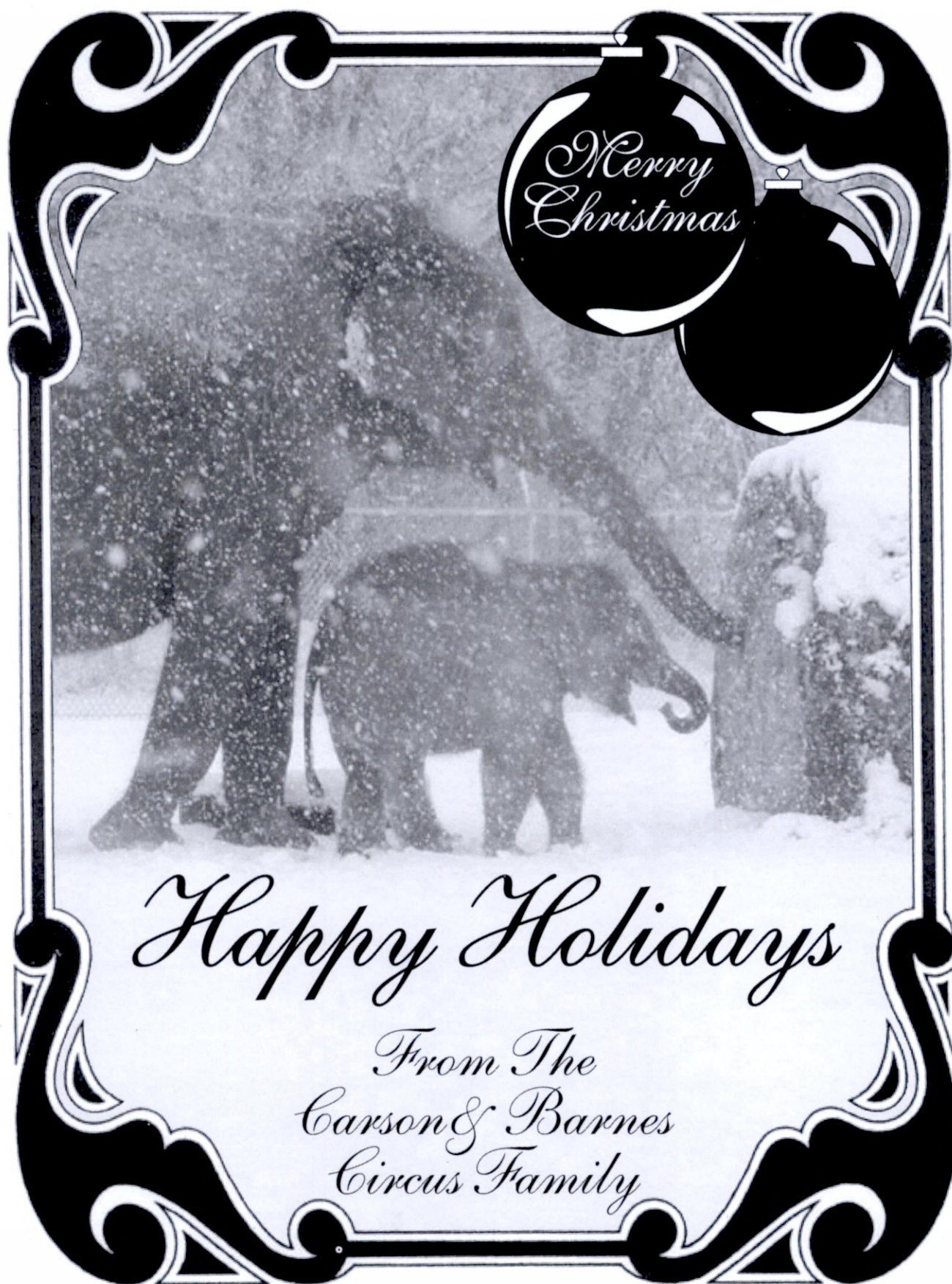
From
1690 to
the Present



GREETING AND BEST WISHES FOR THE

*Holidays and
the New Year*

TOMMY - STRUPPI - NELLIE



The CIRCUS MAGAZINE

an enigma whose time had come

By Robert F. Sabia

It wasn't so long ago in this very publication (*Bandwagon*-May/June 2003) that we discussed in some detail the role of a circus programmer and the financial contributions his efforts made to the wherewithal of the circus which he represented. We briefly addressed the evolution of the circus program commencing with the advance circus flyer which delineated the performers and their presentations at the onset of the traveling circus in America. These offerings were followed by the more sophisticated and structured 4, 6, and 8 page tabloid size programs put out by all major shows which not only set forth the program of acts, but carried a whole host of local advertisers, anxious to display their wares before their potential buyers. You may recall that the programmer's role was to secure these local advertisers' business as part and parcel of the show's program (which was in the most part a giveaway) and, in so doing, contribute in a significant way to the show's bottom line at the end of the season. I suspect, without knowing, that in some cases the programmer's contribution saved many circuses for another season.

Life continued and the program evolved. Starting with the Buffalo Bill Wild West in 1884 and morphing into the Barnum & Bailey Shows of 1898, the circus program changed from a tabloid format into a magazine. But this did not change the role of the programmer. In lieu of the 8 page tabloid, the programmer made his contribution in the form of an insert which was either incorporated into the program magazine for long duration at important stands such as Madison Square Garden, Chicago, Boston or Philadelphia or a tip-in program, which was

for single day dates. More importantly for us, they all included local ads. What was innovative about this magazine format was that it also contained national ads, clear evidence that the United States was no longer a collection of local marketplaces but had a national market for products which had more universal appeal. Car manufacturers, cereal producers and cigarette manufacturers are examples of such businesses. While the local car dealership presented his credentials in the insert, the national brand producer (e.g. Ford) was found in the magazine section. Both paid a hefty sum to use this form of advertising, thereby indirectly contributing to the coffers of the circus. Often the circus magazine program was sold for ten or fifteen cents which was pure profit to the circus as the advertisers' fees paid

The 1884 Buffalo Bill Wild West program. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



for the generation, printing and selling of the program itself. For major circuses such as Barnum & Bailey, drawing an average of ten thousand paying patrons per day with perhaps four thousand additional non-paying patrons, selling to them perhaps five thousand programs at ten cents per copy to both types of customers, one can easily envision that this activity represented an annual profit of well over \$100,000; a meaningful amount by any definition.

While this format satisfied the larger shows, it certainly did not meet the requirements of the smaller ones. On smaller shows, the program magazine format with inserts for local ads were not widely used after the turn of the 20th century. Perhaps it was the inability to attract the higher fee paying national ads that made this approach generally unattractive to the smaller shows. But this did not mean that the medium size shows were precluded from benefiting from this revenue source.

For instance, the I. M. Southern & Co. of New York was very active around 1910 in securing business from such medium size shows as John Robinson, 101 Ranch, Frank A. Robbins, Campbell Bros., and Sig Sautelle. It produced a fine magazine format program with both local and national advertising. It is interesting to note that the national ads were generally not the same as found in the big circuses programs and often not recognizable today. Nor were the ads nearly as plentiful, so the revenue stream from the ads may not have been sufficient to offset the costs of design and publication.

Still the I. M. Southern circus program magazines were probably a source of revenue to only some of the sponsoring circuses. Reflective of this notion is the fact that the I. M. Southern



The 1907 Pawnee Bill Wild West program was published by I. M. Southern.

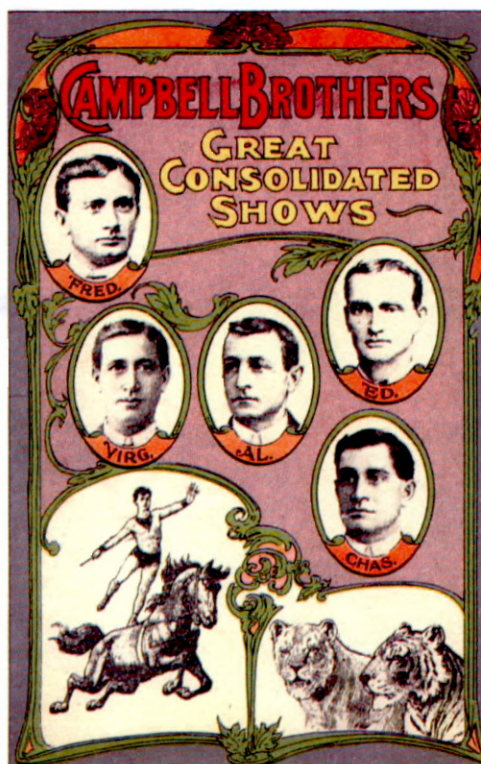
years were only a few in the grand scheme of things. However, while it lasted, this circus program format reached its peak in eye appeal as almost all, if not all, programs contained original and unique cover artwork, and is amongst the hand-somest programs ever produced.

But as the I. M. Southern circus magazine was introduced, lived its short life and then died, smaller shows started using a newer method of garnering revenue through their programs. It came in a system that was used early in the circus business, reaching its zenith in an earlier generation through the 1880's, only later to die out as the circuses' physical structure changed. The role of the singing clown had its introduction into the circus through the opera. Often major arias of the opera had been assigned to a seemingly innocent observer who was outfitted in farcical clothing--a clown by any description. The developing circus was quick to incorporate this type of character into its performance and added the role as not merely an observer in a forlorn love scenario, but a commentator on events of

importance in that particular time or location. The likes of Dan Rice, John Foster, and Billy Burke come immediately to mind. But as the big top tent expanded to its huge size, the singing clown became passé as he simply could not be heard or clearly seen throughout the vast expanse. So the songster booklet was changed from one featuring the singing clown and the words of some of the songs in his repertoire, to one containing a mixture of both the music and the words to the music--essentially a song sheet booklet. Major circuses continued to utilize this format and sell it to their patrons into the 1910's. However, its appeal must have been rapidly diminishing because the song sheet booklet format hardly lasted into that

decade.

Overlapping this period was something that is commonly known as the program/songster. It incorporated the essence of the song sheets format with a program printed on a page (often the back cover). The Great Floto, the Great Wallace and the Walter L. Main circuses are among those that championed this format around the turn of the 20th century. The Will Rossiter Publishing Co. of Chicago was a leader in these program/songster editions. From what is known, these earlier program/songsters were unique to the show involved. Not only were the covers and format different from show to show, but often the songs were unique as well, notwithstanding that they were published in the same calendar year. These early program/songsters laid the foundation for yet another evolution in program format and application. Will Rossiter, and a bit later Harold Rossiter (presumably related), developed a new program/songster format that had particular appeal to the smaller shows of the period. As early as 1906, the Rossiters offered a common cover of circus related images, generally with a green background and the artwork in red, and the show's



The 1908 Campbell Bros. Circus program was published by I. M. Southern.

name imprinted on the cover. The actual program was often imprinted on the back cover. It could also be a full page insert not attached to the actual booklet. There was neither any national nor local advertising contained in the booklet except for Rossiter's advertising its other song and conundrums booklets and like matter. For a particular year, the song sheets were normally identical which provides a means of determining the applicable year when the program loose sheets are missing, a common circumstance. Many examples of this format exist, including such rarities as LaMont Bros., Downie & Wheeler, Campbell Bros., Tompkins Wild West, Jones Bros., and Robinson Famous. The latter show was eventually owned by Jerry Mugivan et. al. This ownership group, which became the American Circus Corporation (ACC), had a long and apparently successful history using the Rossiter format of program/songster. For example, their Howe's Great London circus used this format at least between 1912 and 1921. Even more interesting, the Howe's show changed the background color from green to red to yellow with accompa-

nying modifications to the color of the circus artwork, sometimes in a single year. Also of interest, initially the imprinted price of the program/songsters was 25 cents. Commencing around 1915, the imprinted price was reduced to ten cents. It is reasonable to believe that this was a direct result of the price being too high. Nevertheless, common cover artwork and common songs format must have been an attractive source of income for the smaller shows for at least some of this period.

But this was not the end of the program/songster by any means. The ACC-owned John Robinson Circus used a program/songster format with new and possibly unique artwork in 1918. In 1919 the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was acquired by the ACC and utilized a program/songster, which added something new: National advertising! So we came full circle back to the highly desirable inclusion of national advertising in a program/songster. From this point on until the program/songster was discontinued by the ACC in 1923, the larger ACC shows had national advertisers in their books. The 1920 Howe's Great London did not because it was considered a regional show by the national advertisers, and the 1921 Howe's and 1922 Gollmar merely had a couple of national advertisers which had a relationship to the show itself such as Conn Instruments. Rossiter continued to publish the pro-gram/songsters for the ACC throughout this period, normally using artwork unique to that particular show, but using it for 2 or 3 years in a row.

The days of the program/songster with common artwork and format were rapidly coming to an end. One of the last for the 1925 Walter L. Main Circus had no advertising other than for Rossiter's other products. The music world was changing too rapidly to be satisfied by a publication that was put to print in April. Songs that were popular in April were but an afterthought in June and represented no practical value to the buyer. Tin Pan Alley

and its high rate of song production had to be better served than by the circus pro-gram/songster. But the smaller circuses still had the requirement to present a professional appearing program which could be sold at a reasonable profit to the circus, the publisher and the advertisers, if any. As such, a new circus program format had to be developed to satisfy this need. And it was accomplished in short order in another unique fashion.

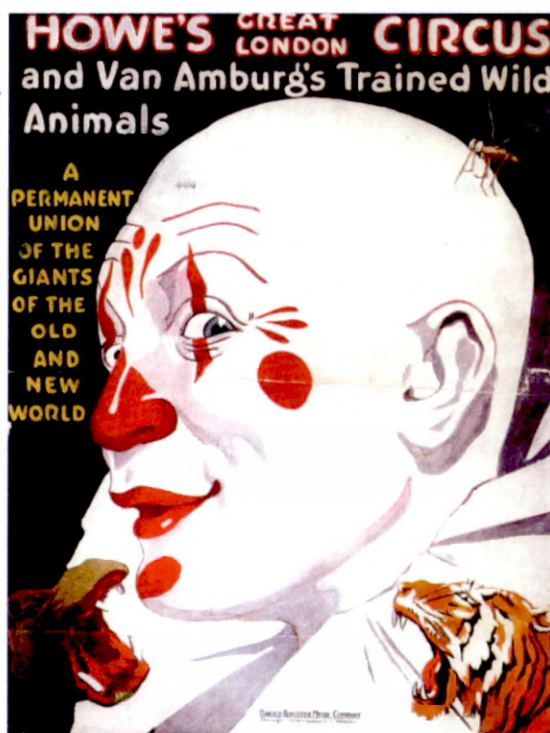
In the mid 1920's, the nation as a whole was enjoying general prosperity and with it, so followed the circus business. As in most generalities there were exceptions to these favorable economic conditions. At the national level, the family farming business was experiencing hard times. Of course, weather was a factor but that was a regional challenge. The business of farming was changing, particularly with the introduction of the huge corporate-type farms in Southern California that sold their products to the entire United States instead of the local town or city, as did the family farm. The huge farms delivered a more predic-

The 1921 Howes Great London Circus songster/program was published by Will Rossiter.

table product both in quality and scheduling. But apart from the family farm, business was great in most sectors. Automobiles, transportation, radios, and telecom businesses were booming and that enviable circumstance provided their employees discretionary income as never before on such a broad scale. An aggressive competitor for this discretionary income, the mid-twenties circuses, were doing very well indeed. To be sure, there were failures such as Gentry-Patterson, Gollmar Bros., and Hertiage Bros., to name a few. But in the main, well financed and well managed circuses were experiencing the best of times. And this included the smaller circuses which were in the process of converting from overland horse-drawn transportation to the much more mobile and efficient motor trucks. As the small circuses became more prosperous, they sought new ways of improving their image to their ever-more-sophisticated customer base. Physical appearance of their caravan, enhancement of their performance, and presenting formal and attractive program magazines were being addressed by these shows.

With the addition of the 101 Ranch Show in 1925, the roster of major circuses was fixed until the end of the

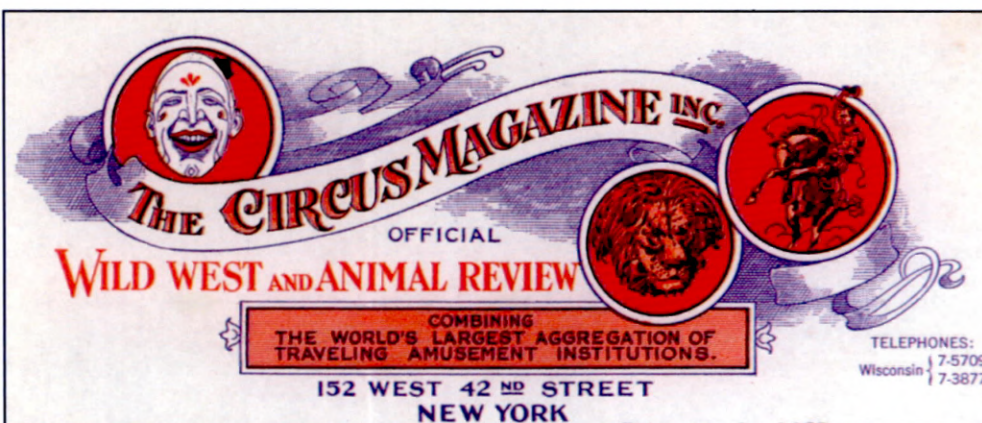
decade. It consisted of Ringling-Barnum, the three ACC circuses (Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson), Al. G. Barnes, Robbins Bros., Christy Bros., and Sparks. Of pertinence, only three of them (Ringling-Barnum, 101 Ranch, and Barnes) had a magazine-type program. The ACC shows utilized roto type giveaway programs which were paid for by the national ads contained therein; not a particularly attractive piece, but the price was right. The remaining three majors (Robbins, Christy, and Sparks) did not issue a program on a regular basis, although from time to time one was published to satisfy the special requirements of a sponsor. In 1926, none of the smaller railers (e.g. Walter L. Main, Gentry, and Hertiage Bros.), or any of



the smaller overland shows including such titles as Downie, Mighty Haag, Hunt, and Seils-Sterling offered programs in any form to their patrons. With the availability of significant discretionary income plus the need to present a more professional image, the opportunity was ripe to develop an innovative program format. All that was required to make this a financial

success was the right person, possessing the correct vision, and imbued with the proper motivation and background. Not surprisingly, such a person existed and he was double-timing in place right in mid-Manhattan, working directly or as a commission sales agent for the well-known Joseph Mayer, Publisher Inc. of New York which had been publishing the Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros. and Forepaugh-Sells program magazines from the turn of the century.

In January 1927, Everett Holmes Snedeker became that individual who was admirably suited for the many challenges extant when undertaking the role of a program innovator. He had experience in the issuance of circus programs over the years. He was civic-minded, serving successfully as mayor of Haverstraw, New York, a river port community on the west bank of the Hudson some twenty miles upstream from New York City. He came from a landed family who could trace its forebears back to the original settling families of New York City when it was founded by the Dutch. His recently deceased father was a shoe merchant in Haverstraw for more than a half century. Everett Snedeker was active and admired in social circles as well. He had recently moved to Ridgely Park, New Jersey, merely a few minutes ferry boat ride from mid-town New York City. As a measure of his dynamic persona, while mayor of Haverstraw, on New Year's Eve, 1924, he rented the Madison Square Garden in New York to put on a huge party entitled "The Elephants Ball." As entertainment for the thousands of guests, he hired Vincent Lopez's and his orchestra, and Paul



Whiteman's and his Piccadilly Players. He also secured the services of a number of members of Flo Zeigfeld Follies for the purposes of judging the costumes worn by the guests. While this enormous venture was business related, it provides an excellent insight into his vision and his approach thereto. He was "The Man."

His own words best describe his overall background, his skills, and his plan. In a letter dated February 11, 1927, Snedeker wrote to the Sells-Floto/Buffalo Bill Wild West Shows setting forth his ideas. It reads in part: "For the past twelve years the writer (Snedeker) has had complete charge of the soliciting, getting up, and issuing of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's official magazine. During these many years, I have had many requests from the smaller shows to get a magazine out for them.

"I have now completed arrangements by which this can be done and the name of each and every show that we represent will be imprinted on the front cover as you will note on the annexed sheet. This magazine will be printed on the best paper, illustrations will be up to date and it will in many ways surpass the Big Show's magazine. However to get the proper circulation and the small shows interested, we herewith submit you an agreement in duplicate which is self explanatory. If you will be good enough to sign same and return it to us we will send you one hundred of these magazines with your name imprinted on the front cover and an additional two pages of reading matter or illustrations as you may desire. Naturally we want this book to be interesting and we

The Circus Magazine letterhead used by Everett Snedeker.

would appreciate your sending us any pictures that you have pertaining to Circuses, Wild West or Animal Shows, that we may reproduce.

"If after receiving this sample hundred of magazines, they meet with your approval, we will supply them to you in quantities at \$.05 each, which does not cover the actual cost of printing...."

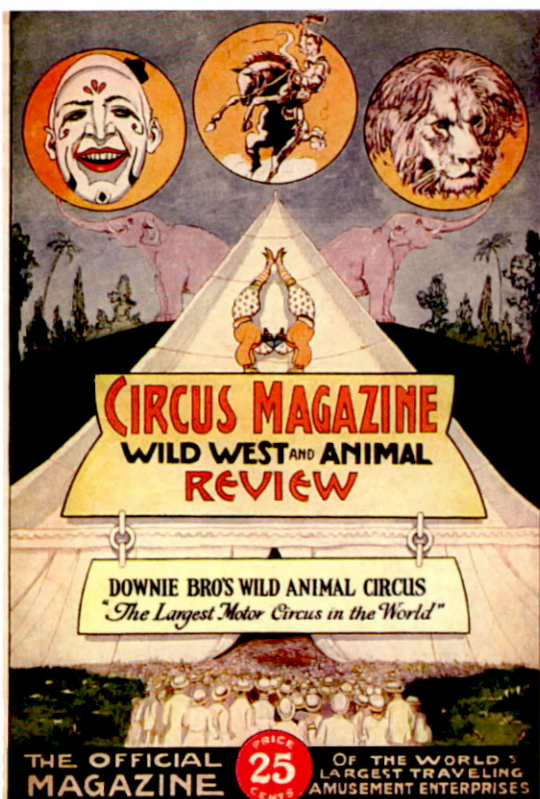
In creating a client base, one would expect that Snedeker sent a similar letter to all the circuses which he believed had interest in a program magazine format that he was planning. This included the other two ACC circuses (Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson), the other majors and those smaller circuses that he knew to be coming out in 1927. At this relatively early stage of the magazine's development, he seemed to be contemplating a single (omnibus) edition which would incorporate writings on all the subscribing circuses with each having only two or three dedicated pages. How attractive this might be to a prominent show such as Sells-Floto is not known. However, it is unlikely this format had much appeal to the major circuses. Perhaps in feedback, he developed a means of satisfying the more diverse needs of his market, as he now understood them to be.

Consequently he came up with another format, the focused approach, wherein this edition would have all the same national ads and share much of the general circus material, such as the obligatory article about Barnum, but be focused upon a single show carrying much

more material about that circus than any others in the booklet. This approach would clearly meet the needs of any circus willing to undertake the commitment to buy the number of copies necessary to justify the special printing. One can only guess how large this copy commitment was, but a venture into the realm of 100,000 seems both doable and reasonable. This is a commitment of selling around 500 programs per show day, which for a show the size of a 10 or 15 car railer appears to be an attractive deal. For a show the size of a Sells-Floto, such a commitment would be easily accomplished.

On the other end of the spectrum, when selling ads, the advertiser is primarily interested in reaching the desired audience in the numbers needed to justify the expenditure of corporate advertising funds? Certainly, working within this precept, all advertisers had to be assured of the volume of programs to be sold. It would seem to me that one had to be seeking a sales base of upward of 400,000 to make the national advertiser even mildly interested during these thriving times. If this rationale approximates the facts, then Snedeker had to be scurrying about visiting all his business clients developed over the past decade or so, convincing them he indeed had the requisite volume of program sales in his pocket.

But in the February 1927 did he? Most probably he did not and maybe he wasn't even close to the desired numbers. Something radical had to be done and Snedeker was just the person to perform the radical surgery required on his patient, the magazine format. He made two significant changes, the second of which created the enigma which is such an important part of this article. First, he answered the mail (meaning he listened to the desires of potential circus subscribers) and introduced a focused edition of his magazine that would discuss in detail a single circus with far less amount about the other shows contained within. And he also kept his omnibus edition which would include all of the other circuses with the specific show title



The 1927 Downie Bros. Circus program did not mention other shows.

imprinted on the cover page and several pages specifically related to each subscribing show in the volume itself. And, as if you could not wait, here is the enigma. One would expect a circus magazine to only address matters of interest as they may relate to the circus. Not so with *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*. Maybe this was the original plan and circumstances forced the final result, but well over 50% of the 10 or more shows subscribing to the omnibus format were not circuses but carnivals. Wow just think, a circus magazine mainly about carnivals. Only on 42nd Street in New York City did this make sense. Better yet, most of the carnivals were of the mid-size variety, none leaders in that industry. As anomalous as this might seem, it really wasn't too inconsistent with reality. The true role of the carnival as the purveyor of exciting rides and presenter of elaborate shows was just then evolving. In 1927, there wasn't a carnival on the road that had 10 rides in its inventory unless one counted pony rides and the like. Almost all had "circus" side shows, wild animal exhibits, geek

shows and special exhibits not unlike the blow-offs found on many circuses. Many still had "circus" bands to entertain their patrons and as often presented free circus acts to titillate them as well. So the several pages that each carnival was responsible for in *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* often had the appearance of a circus with rides. It made little difference to Snekeker as long as the volume of necessary magazine sales was achieved. I suspect he would have preferred only circuses but, being a smart marketing man, he followed the dictates of his customers.

How then did he achieve the desired volume of 400,000? The following changed annually but, in the initial year of 1927, there were three focused editions of the magazine representing Walter L. Main, Gentry Bros., and Downie Bros. If each committed to 100,000 magazines during the year (again about 500 program sales per day) then they represented 300,000 of the total 400,000 requirement.

There remained 100,000 of sales commitment to be spread over the 10 or so (actually 11 or 12 depending on the time of the summer) circuses and carnivals listed in the omnibus editions. If we strike an average that each subscriber took a total of 10,000 magazines over the 20 week season, or 500 per week. This number doesn't seem too large for a small circus but it is not clear how the carnivals sold that many to their patrons, assuming that was their intent. It may be that their objective was never to sell nearly that many, particularly on still dates, but to harvest most of the sales during their fair season. In addition, the magazine with the carnival's title imprinted on the cover was an excellent promotional piece to be given away to fair officials and important visitors. So for the reasonable sum of \$500 per season, the carnival had a ready-made image builder that, with just sales, cost them almost nothing. Sounds like a win-win-win situation for the show, the magazine publisher, and the advertiser. As it evolved, this dual

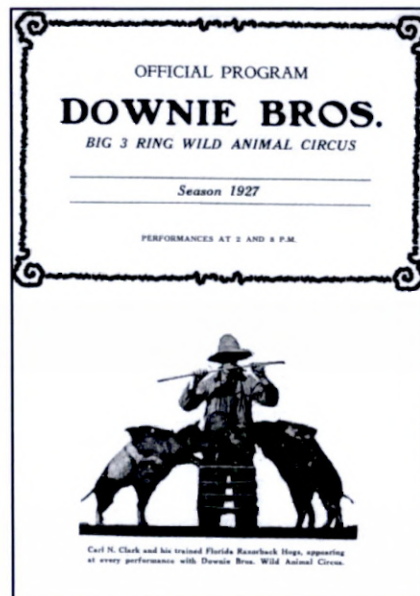
(focused and omnibus) format approach made good business sense for all involved, at least during the initial years. A further look into the finances reveals the following: In a 1928 letter to potential customers, it was stated that the four color page ad cost \$1,600, and with a bleed (no margin and the full color extends to the edge of the page) some 10-15% more. One could expect that the 1927 four color page cost may have been slightly less, perhaps \$1,500. A full page black and white would cost about \$1,000. Half page and quarter page costs would be around 10% higher than the fraction that the ad represented on the page so a half page black and white would be about \$550. If the foregoing is reasonably accurate, then in 1927 the revenue from the ads would approximate the following: Full color (3) \$4,500; full B&W (26) \$26,000; half B&W (25) \$13,750; third B&W (2) \$726; and quarter B&W (31) \$8,525 for a grand total of ad revenue of approximately \$53,500. If one paid a commission of 25% to the securer of the ads, then the gross profit to the publisher would be around \$40,000. Of course, the publisher would be liable for the office expenses including a single secretary. If that totaled \$7,500, then the net profit for the publisher would be over \$30,000, a notable amount in the 1920s. We are aware that although the publisher claimed that the 5 cent charge per copy did not cover the printing expenses, it probably did, including the cost of the artwork on the cover.

From the standpoint of the printer, he would have a total production run of 400,000 for which he was paid 5 cents per copy, totaling \$20,000, another nifty piece of business for the times. Lastly, the denominated show itself. In the case of Walter L. Main, we have guessed it had to guarantee a purchase of 100,000 copies at 5 cents a piece. So for the expenditure of \$5,000, assuming that 90% were sold on the show, 45,000 at the discounted price of 15 cents per copy, and 45,000 at the discounted price of 10 cents per copy, the show had a gross revenue of \$11,250. (It should be noted that the 1927 *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE's* imprinted cover price was 25 cents. However it is doubted that any reasonable

amount could be sold at that price. Most of the popular magazines of the day sold for a dime or a bit more.) We also recognize that the impressive 1927 Ringling-Barnum program magazine was imprinted at 15 cents, so the probability that *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* successfully sold at the higher price is small indeed. If the subscribing show paid its hawkers a total of 2 cents per copy (\$1,800), then the show garnered a nice profit of \$4,400 for almost no effort. While the numbers set forth are not presumed to be accurate, they are representative of reality. All-in-all, it seemed like a good deal for all concerned and represented an initiative worth pursuing.

By mid-1927, having successfully launched this new publication, it was time to get a leg up on the next year's formats. First of all, should there be any modifications to the two formats themselves, particularly the focused format? Secondly, in the critical matter of advertising commitments, how could the magazine become a more effective advertising vehicle? Interestingly, both questions centered on the same subject and that was the ability of the magazine to capture a commitment from the larger shows to use the product. Obviously, the gem of the marketplace was the ACC shows

A page from the 1927 Downie program.



and a commitment from that organization could easily increase the production run in 1928 from 400,000 to 1,000,000 or more. With such a huge increase in volume, this would guarantee a substantial increase in revenue from the advertisers with a resultant jump in the overall profitability to the publisher. It will be recalled that the ACC units of Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson were all using the utilitarian roto type programs in 1927. Each carried some national advertising and included several circus related pictures. They offered little image building but they had decided attractiveness to the public because they were giveaways. On the other hand, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* offered a very attractive presentation and the fact that some money could be made by circuses by selling these programs for perhaps 15 cents must have titillated the fancy of Jerry Mugivan who was ultimately responsible for making the decision as to what direction the ACC shows should go. Snedeker sweetened the pot by causing the focused edition to become even more focused. That is to say, no longer would the focus edition carry any information on any show that was not in the owner's inventory. Accordingly, a Sells-Floto focused magazine may or may not have some material on Hagenbeck-Wallace and John Robinson but no references to other shows would be included. Let's call this a "dedicated program." The fact that the ACC shows would have common artwork on each cover should not have been of concern as only a single show's title would be imprinted on the cover. This approach would not be breaking any new ground with the ACC as this was exactly the same situation it used in the early twenties just prior to switching to the roto format. This was a very convincing selling position to the ACC management that could not fail, but amazingly it did. For reasons that cannot be logically developed and presented, the ACC ultimately decided to continue with the roto format at least through 1928 and, in actuality, until the takeover of the ACC by John Ringling in September 1929.

There was yet another major candidate for inclusion in the inventory

of clients and that was the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Show. The 101 Ranch utilized a program magazine for its 1925 through 1927 seasons. The cover artwork on these programs remained identical for the three seasons. Joseph Miller and his brothers were considering a new program magazine for the 1928 season and undoubtedly were appropriately accosted by representatives of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* to utilize their product. It is reasonable to presume that the dedicated format was being proposed to the Millers, perhaps using the very attractive, wild west appearing 1927 cover artwork.

Unfortunately, the 101 Ranch decided to opt for the roto program format, very similar to those used by the ACC shows. The 101 Ranch continued with this roto format until it went off the road in 1931. A major show commitment continued to elude Snedeker. At least in the 101 Ranch case, the decision may have something to do with its use of roto type couriers during this period and receiving substantial price breaks in the printing costs of its roto program. In addition, the show was successful in capturing many national advertisers for its roto program, registering 14 pages of ads out of a total 30 pages in 1928, and an even better 17 pages of ads out of a total 32 pages in 1929. It may have come down to a simple matter of arithmetic.

By late spring 1927, Snedeker formally unleashed his representatives to capture even more of the 1928 circus/carnival program market. To that end, in the June 11th *Billboard* a good size ad was placed calling attention to *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* and the opportunity to join the happy throng already intending to participate in the 1928 edition. Eleven circuses and nineteen carnivals are listed as being represented by this publication. Interestingly, but not surprising, all of the 14 shows that participated in the 1927 edition are identified, plus 16 new clients. In fact, much to the disappointment of Snedeker, relatively few of those shows participat-



The 1928 Walter L. Main program used a new cover design.

ing in 1927 continued into the 1928 program. Not a single one of the new clients identified in the ad actually participated in the 1928 edition. Only one carnival was included (Sandy's Amusement Shows) which might be an indication that at this time the carnival business did not find this program suitable for its purposes, although carney participation would dramatically increase in the future years. Even more disappointing was losing the growing Downie Bros. (a focused edition), Bob Morton's, and Vandenburg Bros. (omnibus editions) (Note: The latter 2 circuses may not have been on the road in 1928.) However on the plus side, Walter L. Main and Gentry remained dedicated program participants, with Davidson Bros., Seils Sterling (Lindemans), and Tom Atkinson continuing with omnibus participation.

Joining anew in the omnibus format were Dakota Max Wild West, Barnett Bros. (Ray Rogers), Zellmar Bros., Hurlburt Bros, Flying X Rodeo and Orton Bros. Also new in 1928 utilizing a focused format as a 12

page insert was Eldridge & Bentum. The cover price imprint was a more sensible 15 cents for all editions. The Walter L. Main and the Gentry dedicated programs included the previous seasons' routes and a very professional detailed program of acts. All editions included a lengthy article by Karl K. Knecht, Secretary-Treasurer of the Circus Fans Association, explaining the specifics of that organization, including mention of its more prominent members. It should be recalled that the CFA in its formative years was an elitist group representing a number of fairly powerful national figures, all subscribing to the notion that it was all right to love the circus. This was a wonderful asset to the circus business and the ever-alert Snedeker was the first program publisher to take advantage of this marketing tool.

From the standpoint of ad revenue, the 1928 editions ballooned to a gigantic 128 pages with much of that reflective of the ads contained. We counted 3 full color cover pages @ \$1,600 each or \$4,800, 39 whole pages of black and white ads @ \$1,000 each or \$39,000, 41 half page ads @ \$550 each or \$25,550, 44 quarter page ads @ \$300 each or \$13,200, and 19 1/8 page ads including an 8 page 1/8 per page Old Gold Cigarette ad series @ \$150 each or \$2,850, all totaling over \$85,000.

It seems our Mr. Snedeker had hit a gold mine. Even with all of the costs of the operation, it would appear that a net profit of over \$50,000 was realized, far more than many of the circuses that used his publication could ever hope to make. By any measure, they were in the wrong part of the business and he was clearly in the right part. Smart man, this Mr. Snedeker. While he did not capture the rich ACC or the 101 Ranch accounts, he clearly captured the advertising dollars of an array of national firms interested in advising the national market of their products. One wonders whether he was still offering a total circulation of around 400,000 units or something

less than that.

Whatever the case, the 1928 edition of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* was an outstanding business success, a suitable foundation to continue building a powerful presence in the circus business for years to come. In mid 1928, Snedeker and his representatives started an aggressive sales campaign, both in securing national ads and circus/carnival participants for the 1929 edition. In August 1928, Snedeker wrote to Karl Knecht requesting that he update the write-up on the CFA for the 1929 *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* by adding some photos of the CFA officers and some "good and snappy" information. By late October, everything was proceeding as planned and life looked just great. Assuming that there was life. Unfortunately for Everett Holmes Snedeker, there was no life remaining as he died on October 29th, eating breakfast at his home in Ridgfield Park just prior to his departing to his office in New York. His death stunned all those who knew him as he was only 53 years old, in excellent health, and came from a family that had long life spans. He left his wife and three children.

As it relates to *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*, there was no preparation for Snedeker's demise. Dr. H. C. Ingraham was a commission sales representative of the publication, then operating out of Columbus, Ohio. The day after the death of Snedeker, Ingraham wrote to Jerry Mugivan of the ACC: "I have been associated with Mr. E. H. Snedeker in the above company (*The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*) with which you are no doubt familiar. I left New York Saturday (October 27th) on a trip to get renewals of ads for the season of 1929. Yesterday noon, I received a wire from the above office advising me that Mr. Snedeker dropped dead yesterday morning at his home in Ridgfield Park, New Jersey. I have received further details by wire today.

"As *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* was a one man concern, it means that Snedeker's death will cause it to pass out of existence. I have renewals



The 1928 Scott Greater Shows program used this cover design.

already for advertising which total \$16,000-ten pages at \$1,600 per page.

"I can make the program for your three shows bringing you a net income for the season of 1929 of \$40,000 to \$50,000. Can easily have the \$16,000 in ads I have already received transferred to your program. I have over 250 interested prospects to whom I have sent letters and from whom I have received replies in the past months. Sent out over a 1,000 letters and still have replies coming in. More than half of my sure advertisers are in Chicago. I could easily get this book out from your Chicago office.

"Would like very much to come to Peru and talk this matter over with you and will appreciate it very much if you will wire me upon receipt of this telling me when I may see you."

Mugivan replied that Ingraham come to Peru about November 1, after the shows were back in quarters. I suspect Mugivan was interested in the opinions of the three show's general managers regarding the wisdom of utilizing the services of Ingraham in producing a program for each of the shows. In any event,

the ACC commitment to *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* was not forthcoming for the 1929 season. Interestingly, its premier show, Sells-Floto, actually issued at least three different programs during this year, i.e. the Chicago indoor date, the initial road tour, and the revised road tour after Tom Mix joined in Boston for the remainder of the season, all roto type.

Was Ingraham acting in an inappropriate manner when he contacted Mugivan? It certainly doesn't seem to be the case. If what he is saying is accurate, there was no valid reason why or how *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* could continue. Who was going to do the job? And here was Ingraham with ten closures on full page ads and many more real prospects. He owed it to his clients already committed and those near clients to find a home for their ads and their ad revenue. It would be reasonable to presume that the Peru meeting did take place a few days later but perhaps something or someone was also moving quickly in New York City in another direction, and that was the survival of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*!

One can just imagine the consternation within the New York City office at the death of Snedeker. Most probably, there was only a secretary/office manager present, probably a female, but not necessarily so. To the extent known, none of the Snedeker children (2 girls and 1 boy) were involved in the business and Mrs. Snedeker was not known to have a show business background. She was more likely a socialite homemaker. Who then could take over the business? Perhaps a gentleman like Ingraham himself. He undoubtedly knew the circus men and the advertisers.

We just don't know how the magazine survived, but survive it did.

In the spring of 1929, when the entire nation was racing toward nirvana, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* hit the streets with its 1929 edition. It maintained the same offices in New York City. It continued with the same cover used in 1928 in many of the editions and contained a hefty

100 pages filled with stories and ads. Unique to the 1929 edition was the listing on the opening page of the magazine, of all the shows that allegedly used this magazine format for the season. While it appeared to be an accurate listing, it was not. We have examples where shows appeared in one opening page but not another. This may have occurred because of some shows coming on a bit late, causing a reprinting of the magazine to include the late comer with its descriptor two or so pages necessitating replacing another show's descriptor in order to maintain the overall page count of 100 pages.

Two additional items are noteworthy. First, at least two dozen shows were represented, evenly split between circuses and carnivals. Among the carnivals were two of the leaders, Johnny J. Jones Exposition and Clarence A. Wortham's World's Best Shows, a giant step if one was opting in that direction. Why the sudden surge in carnival participation? It probably was not an accident. It may have been a reversal to a goal that had been supported by Snedeker when planning for the 1928 edition. You will recall there was a precipitous drop (7 to 1) in carnival participation between 1927 and 1928. Coincidence? As viewed from afar, not likely. With the literal departure of Snedeker, the desirability of including the carnival industry may have been revisited by the new decision-maker and found to be desirable. It may have been an attempt to shore up the slipping circulation to maintain an attractive base for potential advertisers to consider.

It may have been all about business now which may account for the absence of the CFA article in any future year. Perhaps it was the surge of the carney participation that made the article of less interest. The two King brothers entries, Gentry Bros. Circus and Cole Bros. Circus, were the only dedicated programs. All others (circus and carnival) were omnibus publications. Brison Brothers (Sam Dock) came on board, and/or Barnett Bros. (Ray Rogers) and Seils-Sterling (Lindemann brothers) continued. Secondly, the ad page count re-

mained substantial, thereby guaranteeing a profitable balance sheet. It consisted of 3 full color cover pages, 31 full B&W, 1 three-quarter page, 16 one-half pages, 38 one-quarter pages and the 8 1/8 page Old Gold spread, the equivalent of approximately 50 pages of ads. While down some from the blockbuster 1928 edition, the publication was clearly in the black and prospering. As such, it seems that *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* managed its leadership/ownership crisis quite nicely.

But there was a much larger, widespread crisis on the immediate horizon. By mid-summer 1929, in many respects business never appeared better. The stock market was rocketing toward the stratosphere, the automobile industry was, in the main, striving to meet the demand, radio, movie and general entertainment markets were very healthy, oil was still in the high growth stage just meeting the needs of the automobile needs as augmented by the accelerating switch from coal to oil as a fuel source, and there was even a fledgling airplane industry. Yes, there was a down side. Steel and construction was a bit slow, particularly as it applied to new plant and

A page from the 1928 Circus Magazine program.



residential construction. Of course, there was always the troubling farming problem which was not getting any better. But all-in-all, the country was still heading in the right direction and the circus was very much on this gravy train. It was led by Sells-Floto, whose cash registers were ringing at a phenomenal pace since Tom Mix joined. The success of the Sells-Floto Circus, culminating in the September buy-out by John Ringling of the entire ACC which then included, in addition to Sells-Floto, the Hagenbeck-Wallace, Al. G. Barnes, John Robinson, and Sparks Circuses, re-structured the circus world. It would seem there was little likelihood to sell *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* to the Ringling enterprises. (As it turned out, in 1930, Sells-Floto did in fact use a magazine format to its program. The remaining four former ACC shows utilized the roto program format as did the 101 Ranch.)

Notwithstanding the rosy picture and paralleling Snedeker the year before, in October 1929 the economy collapsed and died. Worse yet (or in the case of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*, better yet), there was no universal recognition that this catastrophe was upon us. Many businesses did not subscribe to this realization until mid-1931. Leading the businesses in vulnerability under these hard times are those who are solely dependent upon discretionary spending and there are no better examples of this grouping than the circus and carnival businesses. When there is a decision whether to spend scarce family funds on bread or circuses, it takes no imagination to know what the choice would be.

However, it took some time before the gloom on Wall Street spread to the rest of the country, at least in a meaningful way. At a meeting called by President Hoover in November, 1929, and attended by the largest and most important bankers, financiers, and industrialists resulted in glowing prognostications for the future of business. It also resulted in a guarantee by these folks not to cut wages for the next year (a pledge that was in the main kept. In fact, Ford actually increased wages). Unfortunately in order to meet some degree of prof-


itability or control losses, layoffs in these industries and businesses were profound, so even more employees lost their jobs, causing those who remained to be very conservative on how they spent their wages, fearing that during the next week, they too would be out of work. And this was just the beginning. The residential and commercial construction business ground to a stop. Regarding home construction, all of the installed implements for the modern home including refrigerators, furniture, electrical, and heating units stopped as well. Within a year or so, 50% of the employable in Detroit were out of work and would be for a few years to come. Banks started to fail, threatening the banking system in the entire world, culminating in Roosevelt's bank holiday in 1933. Times were tough.

Against this background, the Ringling enterprises did not plan any cutbacks in either circuses or their sizes. All went out for the 1930 season essentially as they came back to quarters in the late fall of the prior year. Most of the independents were no more sanguine about the future with Robbins Bros, 101 Ranch, and Christy, all retaining their size from the year before. Indeed new truck shows were being planned and some actually made it to the road in the spring, and there was some talk from usually reliable sources about a new railer or two.

In spite of all of the foregoing general optimism of the circuses, albeit considerably tempered from prior year, a less favorable outlook was reflected in the 1930 edition of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*. While the size was once again reduced, this time from 100 pages to 80 pages (a 20% decrease), the ad pages manifested a more severe decline. With 22 full B&W, 12 half page, 21 quarter and 1 1/8 (Old Gold) ads, the total of 34 equivalent full page ads represented a mighty 32% drop in a single year. The four color Camel Cigarette ad, for the past three years gracing the most important ad page, the back cover, was no longer to be found. It went up in a puff of smoke. This must have been a major setback to

FIRMLY entrenched at the very pinnacle of fame and fortune in the show world Johnny J. Jones has for the season of 1930 surpassed all of his previous efforts, and when the tens of thousands of patrons pour on to his midway this year they will discover that the midway king has gathered together from the four quarters of the globe more strange, curious, entertaining, educational and humorous exhibits, people, performances, riding thrills, human oddities, fun houses than were ever before enlisted under one banner.

Ringling Bros.-Barnum and Bailey is the only one show in the world that is bigger than the Johnny J. Jones exposition, and the Jones two-section train of 50 steel cars is eagerly awaited year after year in the biggest cities on the continent.



JOHNNY J. JONES EXPOSITION

"THE MIDWAY KING"

In one respect Johnny J. Jones is in an enviable position. While most other circuses and midway organizations are peacefully slumbering in their respective "winter quarters" during the off months of the year, Jones has different units of his mammoth organization appearing at the various fairs throughout the State of Florida, including the now world famous South Florida fair and Gasparilla at Tampa, recognized as the third most important fair in the United States. The Jones organization after touring the United States and Canada usually closes its season about the first week in December, and for a few weeks the entire outfit goes into its palatial home on the Volusia county fair grounds at DeLand, known far and wide as "The Athens of Florida." Thousands of dollars are spent with DeLand



The Johnny J. Jones carnival was a part of the 1929 edition.

the publication. The fact that it was replaced by the Leggett & Meyers and Chesterfield Cigarette four color full page back cover display only served to put salve on the wound of losing Camel. Why this Camel desertion? Back to our earlier premise that the attractiveness of ad placement is that you can reach your desired market in the numbers necessary in order to make the advertising investment worthwhile.

It is suspected the claimed circulation was not the presumed 400,000 a couple of years earlier, but more likely 150,000-200,000. For the 1930 season, there were at least 14 carneys and 11 circuses signed up. All of the programs were omnibus editions and generally the same. However, from time to time, the consist would be slightly modified, reflecting shows dropping out and being replaced by late signups. A new feature of the publication this year and continuing throughout its remaining life was the specific page number of the sponsoring show being set forth on the cover just below the title. It is believed

that all participating shows truly delighted in this small change. Although the struggling Johnny J. Jones and Rubin & Cherry/Model Shows continued to lead the carney troop, most of the other shows were medium size at best. Similarly, on the circus end, the only railer remaining was the 10 car Cole Bros. (Floyd King) and that show was on its last legs. The remaining circuses tended to be medium size (Barnett Bros and Seils-Sterling) to those that were very small (Ralston Circus Capers). If 300 copies per week were sold (50 per day) by each circus, the 30 week season would result in around 9,000 for the season or a total for the circuses of around 100,000. Who knows what would be reasonable for the carneys to take on but 5,000 for the season during these difficult times seems very optimistic. Pick your number, but no matter what it is, it

will not be a very impressive one to promote the likes of Camel Cigarettes for any future season.

Did Camel continue in any other circus venue? Most assuredly, it did. There was only one other circus program comparable to *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* and that, of course, was the Ringling-Barnum offering. Published by Joseph Mayer of New York, the 1929 edition consisted of 104 printed pages including the equivalent of 62 full pages of B&W ads. In 1930, the page count dropped by 16% to 88. More importantly, the equivalent ad page decreased even more to almost 20% to 50 equivalent pages. But Camel Cigarettes was on the back cover pages in both issues. The circulation guarantees of the Ringling-Barnum program probably remained the same for both years.

It did not take long before the impact of the depression became apparent and circuses were not long in responding. Early on, Christy cut 10 cars from its 20 car train, only to close the whole affair in early July. It would not go out again. The 101 Ranch Show maintained its 30 car train but called it quits for the season in early August. The large

Robbins Bros. struggled from day one, also cutting 10 cars from its 30 car train around June 1, but made the entire season by playing new territory on the West Coast. Lastly, our participant in *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*, Cole Bros. limped along until August 11 when it closed for all time in Scottsville, Kentucky.

The Ringling shows were also not immune from the economics of the day. John Robinson closed ahead of its paper in September and Hagenbeck-Wallace also closed much earlier than normal. Sells-Floto and possibly Ringling-Barnum were in the black for the year, but neither Barnes nor Sparks could call the season a success. And it was getting worse week-by-week. There were few optimists left in the circus and carnival communities as they looked forward to 1931.

In the Spring of 1931, the attention of the circus minded was focused upon the circus railers and what they might do for the coming season. The Ringling interests decided to field only 5 shows, leaving John Robinson in the barn from that day forward. It also cut 5 cars from both the Sells-Floto with Tom Mix, and Sparks. The latter show was now on only 15 cars and in a revolutionary step dropped its band and substituted "canned" music. Of the independents, only Robbins on a mere 15 cars, and the 101 Ranch Show on a reduced 25 cars (soon to be 20 cars), were going to attempt the season. Dire times indeed.

All of the foregoing pessimism was reflected in the circus and carney community serviced by *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*. For this season, only 7 circuses signed up, all truck shows including Seils-Sterling (for the first time delineating a program) and Barnett Bros. (Rogers). On the other side, a total of 16 carnivals, participated including the Johnny J. Jones Exposition, and the Rubin & Cherry Shows, both of which had seen much better days. The magazine was slimmed down again, this time to 64 pages, another decrease of 20% from the prior year. It was in the ad content that an even greater downfall was experienced. There were an approximately 15 equivalent

full page B&W ads, a huge decrease of over 50%. I suspect that the cost of a single full page B&W ad had also plummeted from the halcyon days of the late twenties as well, so the total revenue stream must have approached, if not exceeded, the expense of publishing it. Chesterfield continued on the back cover, thereby providing a sense of either confidence or stupidity in its continuance.

Meanwhile on the Ringling side, the Ringling-Barnum 1931 program was also slimmer, this time 80 pages or a 10% reduction. Its ad full page equivalent was 44, reflecting a reduction of 12% from a year earlier. Oh yes, Camels remained on the back cover.

Large and frequent layoffs were experienced throughout all areas of the country. Unemployment lines were long and getting longer, and the prospects of a quick business turnaround were bleak. Business and banking leaders were commenting that this economic situation was cathartic, something like a national enema, necessary to right the wrongs of the recent past. Tell that to the

The Cole Bros. Circus 1930 edition used a new cover design.



jobless who were unable to feed their family or themselves for that matter. And with little or no money in their pockets, the fact that the circus was coming to town was not of particular interest-eating was.

It did not take long before the lack of business was reflected in the circus business. The 101 Ranch Show, in its reduced state, made it to Washington, D.C. in early August, and that was it. Ringling-Barnum nearly went under in St. Louis and closed a week later in Atlanta on September 14, its earliest ever. Al G. Barnes and Sells-Floto were not doing well at all.

It seems that only Hagenbeck-Wallace, under the strong leadership of Jess Adkins, and Robbins Bros. were truly in the black, but this favorable financial situation did not stop the Robbins Show from relighting many employees near Mobile, Alabama on September 12th for one of the most bizarre finales of all time.

Sparks completed a long season in Florida and went to the Sarasota quarters, not to be seen again for 15 years. Its closing has long been a matter of speculation as the season may have well ended in the plus column, leading one to opine that taking the show off the road may have been a tax decision rather than a business one. As *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?* became the song of the day, things could not have looked worse for *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* and its life beyond 1931.

In the first light of 1932, things looked grim in the circus world. With the exception of Hagenbeck-Wallace, Robbins and perhaps a couple of truck shows, most circuses considered themselves fortunate if they made it back to quarters in the fall, much less getting out the following spring. It soon became clear that the circus population was going to be reduced. Sparks, 101 Ranch, and Robbins were no longer viable entities. Some truck shows followed suit. Economic indicators continued to fall. Construction was down almost 80% from the 1928 high. This downturn in business volume was directly translated into lost jobs. Accordingly, slightly over

80% of the construction workers were in the bread lines and no work meant no ticket buyers. The popular ditty *Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella* wasn't heard too often from the construction worker community.

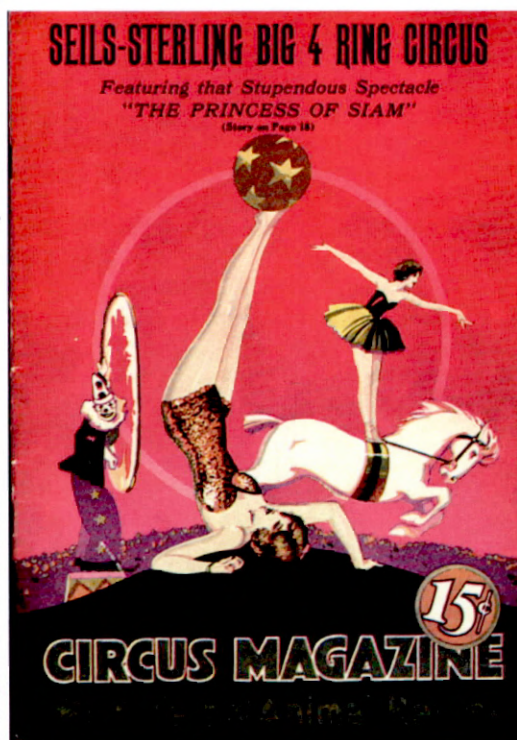
The only glimmer of hope seemed to be in the Hagenbeck-Wallace organization. As contrasted to most shows which were reduced in size, Jess Adkins somehow persuaded the Ringling executives to increase the size of his show from 30 to 35 cars. Conversely, the former second largest, Sells-Floto, now absent its recent star, Tom Mix, was reduced by the reverse numbers, from 35 to 30 cars. Both Barnes and Ringling-Barnum remained the same in terms of railroad cars, but their payrolls were trimmed. The practice of trimming payrolls was shared by all shows, large and small, resulting in many circus folks looking for work at practically any wage. With the growth of Hagenbeck-Wallace "second largest," there came another component, the issuing of a first-class program magazine, clearly the equal to that of Ringling-Barnum in quality if not in size. Better yet, the cover price was zero, its costs being defrayed by the advertising. Of great interest to us was a four page full color center spread which was both very attractive to the reader and a significant contributor to the coffers of the circus. This was the single rose in a bouquet of program thorns, as both Sells-Floto and Al. G. Barnes utilized the roto format. The Hagenbeck-Wallace program contained 12 pages of equivalent full B&W pages plus the four page color spread mentioned above. Of course, all magazine programs had full color inside front, and inside/outside back covers. Chesterfield Cigarettes graced the back cover.

The Ringling-Barnum program stabilized at 80 pages but its advertising page count continued to decrease from 44 to 37 (16%). It should be noted that Chesterfields was on the back cover for the first time. Similar to Ringling-Barnum, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* always was 64 pages. However, it did not follow Ringling-Barnum's decrease in advertising. It actually

increased its advertising pages slightly from 15 to 17 (13%). While it is difficult to measure how financially successful the publication was in 1932, it probably was at least as good as the year earlier and perhaps a bit better. The magazine contained write-ups on 9 circuses, an increase from 7 the year before. On the carney front, the total count was 15, down by 1. For the second year in a row, Seils-Sterling set forth a detailed and professional looking program. The carney count continued to include both J. J. Jones, and Rubin & Cherry.

Of course, the lingering question remained: Was the magazine actually profitable? It probably was as there was no reason to continue it if it wasn't. There is no way that we can actually know how profitable it was. It is reasonable to expect that the cost to the advertisers was significantly less than in the late 20s. If it was 50% of the prior rates, then the total revenue stream was in the neighborhood of \$17,000. If the participants paid for the set up and printing costs, then the entire \$17,000 would be available to pay

The 1932 edition used the 1930 cover but with a new background color.



the commission representative, and the office costs which might be in the area of \$12,000, leaving a net profit of \$5,000. While this is purely a guess, if it achieved this level of profitability, there was every reason to continue.

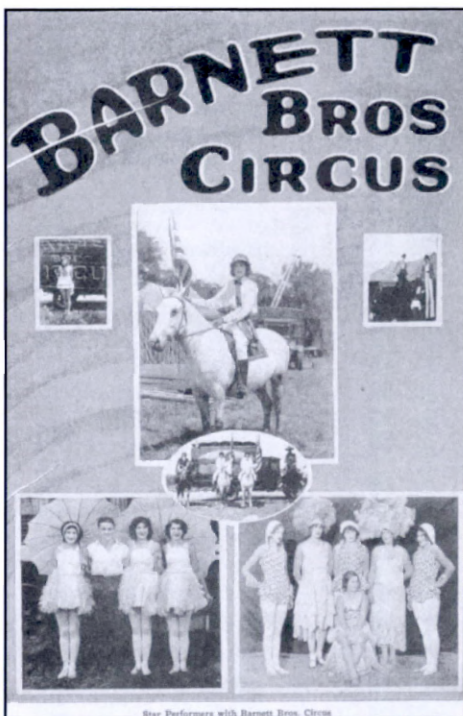
While the circus business was essentially as depressed as the prior year, the circuses and carnivals were far better prepared to face the crisis at hand. That doesn't mean that the bottom line was acceptable. It was a struggle every day, made even more so by the continuous stream of negative news coming from every direction. President Hoover was a rather lugubrious individual, very hard working and sensitive to the situation of his constituency, but he had difficulty being an upbeat public speaker. Having a broad international background, he was particularly affected by the literal bankruptcy of the German and Austrian financial systems. He was well aware that many large American banks had invested significantly in the foreign banking systems and as they went, the American banks were likely to follow. Being an election year, 1932 presented an opportunity for a fundamental change in governance within these United States. Hoover's opposition was an individual who was his obverse. Franklin Roosevelt was an enthusiastic, excellent communicator, who was not nearly as complete an individual as Hoover. But he was the shining ray of hope in the dark winter of Republican pessimism. The electorate overwhelmingly supported Roosevelt in his quest for the presidency, and in this regard, 1932 closed on a high note. Another optimist was also favored by a positive result.

While the three other Ringling shows had poor seasons, resulting in John Ringling defaulting on the loan that permitted him to buy the ACC interests in 1929, Jess Adkins' Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus once again finished the season in the black. Maybe it was the free program magazine that provided for this uniquely positive ending for the season and may be it was just sound routing and advertising. Whatever the reason,

this was the one good news story that came out of the season. Things were so serious on the Ringling end that 1932 marked the end of the famous Sells-Floto Circus. In addition, the Ringling organization was no longer Ringling run. Outsiders would direct the Ringling interests until the demise of *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* after the 1937 season.

It wasn't so much that Hoover's administration was lacking good ideas and in fact it did implement some. It was that what the nation needed was not only good ideas and programs, but they had to be communicated in a fashion that was uplifting and promising. Hoover had much going for him but communication skills were not in his nature. Roosevelt's strongest attribute was communication, buoyant and positive in all regards. Interestingly, during the four months between the election and inauguration in March 1933, Roosevelt stood at arms length from Hoover despite the latter's efforts to work jointly for the common good. Immediately upon assuming the role of President, however, Roosevelt implemented a series of programs which focused upon getting people back to work. Not all these programs were successful but many were; and by summer a much healthier national attitude was apparent, even though the economic indicators were no better than the previous year. In fact, in many respects, they were worse. This "Hundred Days" flurry of activity translated to people being a bit more willing to spend a quarter or two on non-essentials, things like a ticket to the circus.

A peek into the circus community at the onset of 1933 indicated a reluctance to take any risks. The new team heading the Ringling interests decided to scuttle Sells-Floto and go out with just 3 shows, Ringling-Barnum, Al. G. Barnes, and Hagenbeck-Wallace. It was the 50th anniversary of the Ringling title and much was made of that during the season. But the real news featured Hagenbeck-Wallace and its general manager, Jess Adkins who convinced his superiors to permit him to add five more cars to his unit bringing the total up to 40 cars, traveling in two sections. More than this,



A Barnett Bros. Circus page from the 1932 edition.

he also gained permission to carry certain parade wagons on this expanded train so that the show could give experimental parades to test the interest of those representative communities and gauge the parade's impact on business. On the truck circus front, there were certain plans to be noticed. Downie (Charles Sparks) was expanding somewhat. Sam Dill was intending to take out a major truck show under his name, Seils-Sterling continued to grow and Barnett Bros. (Rogers) seemed to be more confident. Perhaps there was reason for hope after all.

The CIRCUS MAGAZINE had reason to share this confidence. While remaining at 64 pages of content, its full page equivalent ads grew to 19 pages, another 13% increase from the prior year. There were 9 circuses and 14 carnivals represented. However 2 of these circuses and 3 of the carnivals were represented by a mere half of page of text which indicates a smaller commitment to take the numbers of magazines previously required and probably still required of the other participating shows. Nevertheless, these shows were still represented in the magazine. The cover price remained

15 cents although it is doubtful that this price was frequently charged the customers.

New forces were coming into play in the carnival field. About this time, the largest carnivals were either considering or publishing an annual which would be used as an advertising booklet to be given to fair and other important personages. This booklet was loaded with photographs showing the rides, shows and other attractive items the carnival featured that year. By the end of the decade, every major show would be issuing such a booklet, obviating the need to participate in *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*. Such forces were an increasing influence on its profitability and viability.

While *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* was experiencing slightly better times, the same was not true for Ringling-Barnum. Its program magazine was further reduced in size to 64 pages, a significant decrease of 20%. Also decreasing were the full page equivalent ads to a new total of 33 full pages, down 10%. The cover charge was also 15 cents. Hagenbeck-Wallace's magazine type program had new artwork on its cover. This year it charged five cents for the program. It consisted of 36 pages and had 8 equivalent full B&W pages of ads and 4 full color pages as a mid-volume spread. Although the B&W equivalent page count was down substantially from the previous year, since the show was now charging for the magazine, it was probably a profitable venture.

New this year was a program magazine for Al. G. Barnes. It used the cover artwork from the 1932 H-W program without the statement that "This magazine is free." Although it was given away from time to time, it is suspected that where the show-folks believed that the magazine could be a revenue gatherer, then a nickel was charged. It was a slim volume of only 18 pages and contained only 5 equivalent full pages of B&W ads.

With the new administration in Washington singing *Happy Days are Here Again*, the public started to gain a modicum of confidence in the future of the United States. Early circus reports in May were better than

the previous year and continued to improve as the season progressed. The National Recovery Act (NRA) led the way in promoting small business and with that, some money was invested in inventory and jobs. Roosevelt and his staff continued to use the radio as the principal means of communicating to the citizenry. In the main, it worked in the best interest of all, including the outdoor show business. By season's end, all three Ringling shows returned to quarters in the black headed by Hagenbeck-Wallace which turned in real money to the corporate coffers. It appeared that Adkins had succeeded with his parade initiative, as all of them were very well received by the towns played both in terms of business and receptivity of the city fathers. Truck shows such as Sam Dill, Barnett, and Downie were also pleased with the results. No millionaires yet but no paupers either. In summary, 1933 was far from bright but at least it was significantly more rewarding than the recent past.

Entering 1934 and rapidly approaching its first year in office, the Roosevelt administration could justifiably review its performance with a degree of satisfaction. The banks were somewhat stabilized after the "Bank Holiday." To be sure, more were going under but at a much slower rate than previously. As importantly, the banks' depositors were returning, indicating that confidence was increasing in those institutions. The much acclaimed PWA (Public Works Administration) pumping billions into the economy by embarking upon huge construction projects such as dams, new highways, major bridges and the like. Often overlooked, the PWA funded and erected over 70% of the new schools built between 1933 and 1940. Complementing the PWA was the ambitious Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), whose charter was to construct and maintain a series of large dams with resulting lakes in an area that heretofore was an economic wasteland. Both the PWA and TVA were well managed, long term programs, the benefits from which we experience today. With the upswing in construction, support infrastructure industries such as



Conroy Bros. Circus was a part of the 1932 edition.

steel, cement, heavy duty earth moving equipment, and bricks became very active, particularly because inventories were virtually non-existent from the darker days of the depression. Agriculture continued to elude fixing with prices for agricultural products being less than 25% of those during the 1910-1914 period. And with the enormous and decade lasting weather problems in the southwest, things would not really improve for that region until World War II. However, the general unemployment which reached 25% of the nation's employable shortly after Roosevelt took office was almost halved a year later. Even Hollywood was producing lighter and upbeat movies. Contrast *Our Daily Bread* as reflective of 1933 with *The Gay Divorcee* of 1934 featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers romping across any dance floor they stumbled upon over several continents. There was much hope after all.

It is generally understood that circus owners and producers must be the world's greatest optimists in business. Who else would spend huge amounts of up-front money and then travel about the country, playing a new locale every single day, in the belief that there will be sufficient ticket buyers to purchase enough ducats despite the inclement weath-

er, to permit the circus to continue in the black? Fortunately for all of us, there are such optimists, and in 1934, with few exceptions, they were right in their attitudes. It is not surprising that the eternal optimist, Jess Adkins, was once again leading the charge. This time, he prevailed upon the Ringling executives to enlarge the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus even further, to 50 (really 48) cars, featuring an exceptionally fine performance with Clyde Beatty and the multitalented, Cristianis amongst many others. He even convinced them to permit a daily street parade of gigantic proportions. Following his led, the Ringling executives also determined that Ringling-Barnum and Al G. Barnes would also present outstanding programs. In the truck circus community, Sam Dill combined his circus with the Tom Mix Round-Up and presented an enlarged circus on a national tour. Downie, Seils-Sterling, and Barnett were also planning big things. All-in-all, the circus business was prepared to enjoy its best season since 1929.

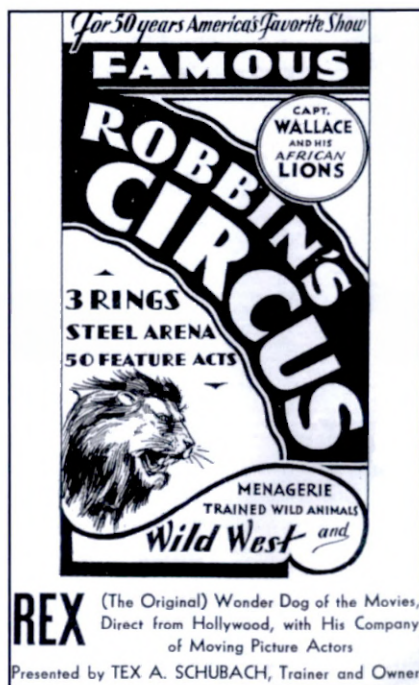
Our favorite journal of the times, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*, had good reason to join the parade toward the sunlight. A total of 15 circuses signed up for the year with standbys Seils-Sterling (with detailed program) and Barnett Bros. being augmented by the likes of Rice Bros. (with detailed program) and World Bros. (also with detailed program). The circus count was almost double that of 1933 and it contained only multi-page commentary as opposed to half page commentary on several circuses in the 1933 offerings. For the first time in years, Johnny J. Jones dropped out, probably because it generated its own annual. However, Rubin & Cherry remained and was joined by the biggie Dodson World Fair Shows. Nine carneys signed up, down slightly from 1933. The overall page count was up to 72, an increase of 13%, and this increase was reflected in the ad population. There were a total of 21 equivalent full page ads marking a 10% step forward. The cover price remained at 15 cents.

On the Ringling-Barnum end, things were at least as good if not better. The total page count exploded by 31% to 84 pages for the magazine

which cover price was 10 cents. From an ad standpoint, there was a 10% increase in equivalent full page B&W ads to a new total 36 1/2 PLUS 4 internal full page 4 color ads, a new dimension for Ringling-Barnum but not Hagenbeck-Wallace. This latter circus had 48 pages in its program. Its equivalent full page B&W ads remained at 8 BUT its full color page ads zoomed from 4 to 10, and full page ads were and are a high ticket item. All this for a nickel a copy. As for the Barnes show, once again an 18 page program containing five equivalent full page B&W ads was published. This time however, in keeping with the times, it was no longer a giveaway as this slim package would cost the public 5 cents.

As promised, the circus business reflected the attitudes of the citizens, getting better every day. Once again, Hagenbeck-Wallace vindicated its general manager, Jess Adkins, by experiencing its best season in more than a decade. Ringling-Barnum ventured out to the West Coast for first time in five years, but was not rewarded at the box office for the long ride. Nevertheless, the show had a pretty good season, up decidedly from 1933. Barnes was clearly in the black, having its best season in years. On the truck side, Sam Dill's/Mix operation was taken over by Tom Mix as Dill was very ill, not long to live. A fine year was experienced by this show and Tom Mix was back in the circus business with gusto, this time as an owner. Downie, Barnett, and Seils-Sterling shared in the good tidings as did most other circuses. Message to Fred and Ginger - "Keep dancing up a storm and make the public happy. You did us good."

For no specific reason 1935 turned out to be a disappointment for the entire nation, and the circus world as a small part thereof. It started well enough for the incumbent Democrats. The mid-term elections in November, 1934, were an enormous endorsement of the New Deal and Roosevelt's administration. The Republicans were simply talking to themselves with no real programs to offer the voting public and therefore had no appeal. Congress became overwhelmingly Democratic, ready



The Famous Robbins Circus was part of the 1936 edition.

and able to follow Roosevelt's directions. On the circus front, followers of the tanbark trail were excited to discover that two major railroad circuses were being planned under the auspices of Zack Terrell, formerly the general manager of Sells-Floto, and Jess Adkins, of Hagenbeck-Wallace fame. Original plans were to take out a 20 car show under Terrell and a 15 car show under Adkins. And there was more. Tom Mix was upgrading the Sam Dill truck inventory and planning the largest truck circus up to that time, with the capability to play the largest cities and take on all comers. What is great news for some was perhaps a cause of consternation for the Ringling executives. Losing the strong and successful hand of Jess Adkins to a competing circus organization was very troubling to Sarasota. Worse yet, Clyde Beatty joined forces with the Terrell/Adkins combine, and as it turned out, would be featured in the ensuing show's title. As a result, Ringling cut back the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show, reducing the train from 48 to 40 cars and discarded the street parade as unnecessary. While all this was taking place and perhaps because of the decisions made in Sarasota, the Terrell/Adkins combine decided to delay plans for two small-

er circuses and combine the assets into a single circus, large enough to take on any Ringling show, head to head. This new circus was named Cole Bros. with Clyde Beatty and Allen King and would feature a daily street parade. So far, so good.

As spring approached, strange things were starting to manifest themselves throughout the nation. Although the economy was progressing rather nicely and many were going back to work either in the traditional businesses or the government sponsored projects, the general population did not seem pleased with the distribution of the fruits of their labor. For sure, they were glad to have a job but sensed the profits were once again going into the hands of the wealthy, who in major part, created the mess that the country was in. A series of strikes resulted with the objectives of better working conditions and higher wages. With the strikes came riots, and with the riots came deaths of a number of the strikers. Today, we would attach the label of "consumer confidence" in some part as a measure that the tough times were clearly not over and the optimism of 1934 had suddenly turned sour. While all this may be somewhat apparent 70 years later, it wasn't very obvious in early 1935. Most assuredly Fred and Ginger were tripping the light fantastic in *Top Hat*, cavorting about to the refrains of *Cheek to Cheek*. But that was make-believe and the economy and jobs were reality.

The shows took to the road in early spring with many having programs as part of their wares to sell. Costing a dime, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* was very close in format and volume to 1934. It had the same number of participants, 15 circuses and 9 carnivals, in its inventory. The page count was back to the 1933 level of 64 from 72. It follows that the advertising pages were down substantially, from 21 to 16 equivalent full pages, a reduction of 22%. Even more importantly, the inside front and back covers were black and white for the first time. While other programs were becoming populated with full color ads not only on the high priced cover pages but scattered throughout the publication, *The CIRCUS MAGA-*

ZINE had none. This was news of the worse kind for our favorite program magazine.

Other major circuses' programs were faring much better. Ringling-Barnum, also at 10 cents, increased its page count from 84 to 92, the highest since 1929. Both the 1934 and 1935 editions had 40 equivalent full pages of ads. However, within these totals, the full color pages increased by 300%, from 4 to 12. Color was the future in advertising even though it was more expensive. Hagenbeck-Wallace had a similar experience. Continuing to charge but a nickel for a 46 page volume, its black and white full page equivalent ads increased slightly from 8 to 9. But like Ringling, its full page color ads expanded from 4 to 10. Even Al G. Barnes participated in this surge of advertising in its program. Also priced at 5 cents, its full page equivalent B&W ads increased from 5 to 7. Better yet, while it did not have any internal color ads in 1934, the 30 page 1935 edition had a total of 4 such ads.

The new kid on the block, Cole Bros., cobbled a 22 page program, entitled the "LIFE OF CLYDE BEATTY." Costing 5 cents, being a new volume, its advertising was very sparse, totaling only 4 full page equivalent ads of which 2 were in full color. Its inside front cover was another black and white ad while the inside back cover didn't even have an ad, it depicted a photograph of some performers.

While Cole Bros. situation was understandable, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE's* dilemma was not. Given the major show appearance of The Tom Mix Circus and Roundup, it is surprising that it never issued an annual program. On a few special dates, a program unique for that date was printed, but this first-class show never opted for a regular program volume.

The economic situation and consumer confidence deteriorated throughout the season. In much of the United States weather also took its toll on business as well. Circuses generally did not do as well as the previous year. Three shows, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Cole, and Barnett, retrenched somewhat at mid-year.

Both Hagenbeck-Wallace and Cole cut 5 cars each and Barnett sent a number of trucks back to quarters. While Ringling-Baenum remained somewhat profitable at year's end, Barnes did not. From best available information, Hagenbeck-Wallace was marginally in the black when it returned to quarters but had sufficient funds on hand to get the show out in the spring without asking Sarasota for money. So it came as a shock for most observers that the Ringling management decided to take the show off the road, at least for 1936. It has been said that, much like the situation taking Sparks off the road, tax considerations may have been the culprit rather than the prospects for the coming season. The new Tom Mix Circus probably had the best season of any major circus and was a clear winner. So as 1935 drew to a close, Roosevelt was wrestling with a vacillating economy, as was the circus community projecting itself into the season of 1936.

The one salient constant about Roosevelt was that he wasn't. Because he was not a ideologue but rather a consummate politico, he had little problem in casting aside programs that did not work or were stricken down by the Supreme Court such as the NRA, and substituting

The 1937 Walter L. Main Circus program.



others that were likely to pass muster by the Courts and still satisfy the basic objective of getting people back to work. So it was that commencing in March 1935, there was a flurry of new legislation from a supportive Congress (The Second Hundred Days) that attempted to achieve success in those areas that were unsuccessful in the prior two years. As 1936 dawned, two hugely important acts were being implemented: The Works Progress Administration (WPA-euphemistically called "We Poke Along"), and the Social Security Act. The sole objective of the WPA was to put a host of employables back to work, accomplishing something, anything, that would benefit society. While the pay was minimal (\$15 per week), it was much better than being on relief. It reached into all aspects of America, including the arts, promoting artists, musicians, writers, and of pertinency to us, circus performers.

No need to comment on Social Security as it is with us today. In the spring of 1936, reacting to the new governmental stimulus, the economy settled down and was moving forward again, and with it, the circus business.

Led by Ringling-Barnum's strong showing in Madison Square Garden, circusdom started the season well and generally continued at that level most of the way. In the absence of competition from the inactive Hagenbeck-Wallace, the Cole Bros. got off to a fine start in Chicago and the Midwest. It did experience some disappointing business in the heat of the summer, but from Denver on to the west coast, it was mostly full and near-full tents fostered by the first major street parade that many of the West Coast cities had seen in almost a decade. Al G. Barnes also enjoyed good business throughout the year and came home very much in the black.

1936 was also a breakout year for truck circuses in both size and business. Once again, Tom Mix paved the way with a very successful coast-to-coast tour. It was the largest trucker, perhaps equal to a 25 car railroad show. Not too far behind were first class large shows such as Downie, Seils-Sterling, the

rapidly growing Russell Bros., and the flex-size Barnett Bros. This latter circus had the unequalled characteristic of being able to size up or size down at any time during a season to best meet the business extant. All of the above mentioned truckers did well throughout the year.

The *CIRCUS MAGAZINE* also shared these good times in a limited manner. Back to 64 pages with a 10 cent cover price, the volume once again represented a total of 15 circuses and 9 carnivals. Old standbys such as Seils-Sterling, Barnett Bros., and Lewis Bros. were joined by Silver Bros. (Sam Dock) and Joe B. Webb. Of interest, all of these mentioned circuses set forth its program of acts within their write-ups with the exception of Barnett which had an extensive listing of acts being presented but not necessarily in the order of presentation. Rubin & Cherry and Dodson World Fair Shows were the only biggies in the carnival column. There were a total of 15 equivalent full page B&W ads, a decrease of 10% from 1935. On the plus side, the inside front, inside back, and the back covers all were in color once again.

A dramatic change was made to the Ringling-Barnum program which carried over to the Barnes program. The standard 7 by 9 inch size which had been used since the turn of the century by many circuses was increased to 8 by 11 inches. This was in keeping with the dimensions of many general distribution magazines. Accordingly, a full page ad, especially full color, had a measurably increased impact upon the reader. The cover price of Ringling-Barnum remained at 10 cents as did the 92 pages within. There was a 20% decrease of equivalent full page ads to a new total of 23. On the other hand, the captivating full page color ads remained constant at 12. The new formatted Barnes program grew to a high of 46 pages at a nickel per. While the equivalent full page B&W ads dropped severely from 7 to 3, this decrease was more than made up by the rapid growth of full page color ads from 4 to 12. Cole

Bros. looked less artificial in its second year with a new cover. This slim pamphlet of 22 pages retained the old size and still cost 5 cents. Advertising was almost non-existent with only 2 full color pages and scattered page ads. Both inside covers were B&W. It would seem that the Cole focus was not on garnering ads for its program.

One observation regarding ads in *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*; most were not from businesses that had national recognition, such as car manufacturers, cereals, and beauty products. Many seemed to have regional appeal at best. A sign of the times perhaps? One could hope so, but it may have been because of a smaller circulation which resulted in a declining interest by large national accounts to place their advertising dollars in such a marketing venue.

The year of 1936 closed out with a national election of the president. Unfortunately for the Republicans, they never bothered to put up a truly viable candidate. Alf Landon of Kansas could never be realalistically considered as such. He captured a total of eight electoral votes out of a total of more than five-hundred, which prompted James Farley's famous quip regarding Landon's showing, "As Maine goes, so goes Vermont." It wasn't so much that Landon was out of step with the times because he was more progressive than almost anyone else in the GOP. It was that he did not offer the electorate anything really different than Roosevelt's platform so there wasn't any reason to change from a known commodity.

This Lewis Bros. Circus page was a part of the final 1937 edition.



With the election endorsement from the American people, there was little reason for Roosevelt to modify his policies or the course he was setting for the nation. As we entered 1937, times were actually good. Business in many regards was within reach of the 1929 levels. There were realistic prospects that business could actually exceed the later 1920s high water marks. There was every reason to be upbeat about the next year. This is exactly how the circus world was evaluating its prospects for the next season. And with these good tidings, the circuses were gearing their size to take maximum advantage of these encouraging circumstances. To this end, Hagenbeck-Wallace was coming back on the road with gusto under new and independent management. On 35 cars with a sterling reputation well established along its intended route, its management was confident that it would turn in a healthy return come October or November. As a corollary activity, Cole Bros. was jumping its consist by 10 cars creating a road show of 40 cars. It was clearly the equal of the 48 car 1934 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus including a powerful street parade as its principle drawing card. For the first time, Cole was planning to play New England, taking on Ringling-Barnum head to head at many locations. Ringling-Barnum was also anticipating another good season as was its subordinate unit, Al. G. Barnes which tacked on the Sells-Floto title.

It goes without saying that the truck circus world was similarly optimistic. Once again, Tom Mix was ready and able to play a big city route, fearing no one along its path.

Downie, Seils-Sterling and Russell were all strong and healthy. Ray Rogers changed the title of his Barnett Bros. to Wallace Bros., and featured the movie star Hoot Gibson as a daily come-on. Other truck circuses were also favorable in their outlook regarding the coming season.

On the program front, generally speaking, things looked good for most.

Unfortunately this did not include our favorite publication, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*. On first glance, all was well. The total page count remained at 64 with a cover price of 10 cents. Further review indicates the total circus count actually increased from 15 to 16 and the carnival participation remained at 9. So far so good. Old standbys such as Seils-Sterling, Wallace (Barnett), Lewis, and Rubin & Cherry were still on-board. But the all important advertising page count continued to fall, this year to an all time low of 13 equivalent full page B&W ads. Although all three covers were back to full color, B&W ads were what paid most of the bills and the publication just wasn't getting them.

Other programs were having their challenges but were generally on the plus side. Remaining at 10 cents, Ringling-Barnum's total page count dropped by 4 to 88. However its B&W equivalent full page ad count increased by 10% to 25. We note on the obverse that the full color page count decreased from 12 to 8, not a good sign. Barnes also had a full color page count reduction from 12 to 8 for the year.

Regarding Cole, it actually issued 3 totally different programs for the year, the Chicago Stadium, the New York Hippodrome stand, and the road program. The former two were of the newer 8 by 11 inch size and the third was of the old standard size. The Chicago program was priced at 15 cents and consisted of 32 pages. It had 21 equivalent full page B&W ads. All of its 3 cover pages were 2 color ads. The New York Hippodrome program was similarly priced and paged. However it contained only 12 pages of B&W ads. Both its inside front and back covers were B&W and its back cover was two color. The road show program was a nice presentation of 22 pages at 10 cents per. It continued to be relatively barren of ads with only 3 equivalent full page B&W ads and 2 full page color ads. Its inside front and inside back cover were B&W but the back cover itself was 4 color. Hagenbeck-Wallace sold a program at the outset of the season that cost 10 cents and was devoid of any advertising. It was merely a heavy

paper foldout and did not have any eye appeal whatsoever.

While the prospects for the economy were indeed bright early on, they did not prove to be as such. Once again, labor unrest, manifesting in large and violent strikes, frequented the industrial centers, particularly from mid year on. Still Ringling-Barnum looked upon the year as a very good one and to some degree, Barnes did likewise. With the management shift on Hagenbeck-Wallace to a Howard Bary lead organization; one was never too sure how that show was doing. Some say pretty good but as events turned out relative to mischief happening in the financial end, one really wonders. The Cole show started the season with a bang and continued that way till mid-season. However the return to the west coast did not nearly provide the revenue of the prior year and so the full season could only be categorized as OK. In the main, truck shows did just fine with the customary one or two falling along the wayside but that was no different than any other year, even in the best of times.

By the end of the year, most circus owners and managers looked to 1938 with enthusiasm. Indeed two new railroad circuses came out in the spring to the pleasure of all those interested in the circus. Tim McCoy Real Wild West was as handsome a rail show as ever hit the road, being new in almost every respect. Most of the marvelous equipment remained new as it did not last a month on the road. Its counterpart, Robbins Bros., under the auspices of Terrell/Adkins lasted the year and did so in better shape than any other railer. It too never saw the light of day again. As it turned out, 1938 proved to be a disaster for the economy. In many respects it was worse than the earlier collapse during the 1931-1933 time frame because the downfall in 1938 took place in about 8 months. And of course, as the general economy went, the circus business quickly followed. Most historians consider 1938 to be the worst year in the entire history of the circus.

What about *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE*? Sadly, it did not publish in 1938 or any year thereafter. Given

the economy, it was just as well. In the case of this publication, it was probably a simple matter of ads. Its circulation could not command the favorable attention of national advertisers and without these ads it could not be even marginally profitable. It outlived its usefulness and died a natural death.

But during its lifetime of eleven years, *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* did have meaningful and significant value to a number of circuses and carnivals that utilized its pages to publicize their stories. Shows such as Seils-Sterling, Barnett, Johnny J. Jones, Rubin & Cherry and others were participants for extensive periods of time, some being involved every year of the magazine's existence.

That says plenty when it comes to evaluating whether the publication was useful and a success. It may be that times had changed and the need was no longer there. One thing for sure, this type of format was never tried again which probably speaks for itself. The enigma whose time had come became the enigma whose time had past. Not unlike Fred and Ginger. So be it.

Acknowledgments: This article was the work of a dedicated team of interested circus historians who researched their own collections and memories to ensure that all the information available on *The CIRCUS MAGAZINE* available throughout the writing. Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Fred Dahlinger, and Richard Flint worked continuously with the writer, providing information and ideas so that the legacy of Mr. Snedeker was correctly preserved. Their contributions made this article possible, and hopefully meaningful. I am most thankful to them for all that they did. It is certainly a pleasure working in such a positive environment. Many thanks are also due to my wife, Susan, who had to proof this material in its entirety. Sadly for her, she is actually starting to understand what's being written. Never a good sign.

A followup article on the long history of Joseph Mayer Company, the long-time Ringling and Barnum program publisher, the will appear in an up-coming issue.

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Reminiscences Of Circus Animal Trainers

By John Daniel Draper

This article is dedicated to my very good friend, John Herriott. (see "Five Generations of Herriotts," *Bandwagon*, January-February, 1995.) From his youth, he enjoyed interesting stories and accounts by his father, Milton, and others concerning lesser known horse trainers and equestrian performers of note. A few of these individuals John came to know personally and at least one, John Smith, was once his colleague in the circus ring.

John Hardin Smith (1879-1969)

John Smith, son of Jake Smith of Petersburg, Illinois, was a master trainer and performer of manege and liberty horses. As a boy he worked around the bams, helping groom and care for horses. The earliest circus references for him are in 1891-1893 when he worked with ring stock, was a pony driver and was one of 4 jockey race riders on the Adam Forepaugh Circus. In 1897 he was breaking horses at Petersburg, Illinois for Ed Shipp. Later he was with Rhoda Royal, breaking and working manege horses. By 1899 and 1900 he had moved to John Robinson's Circus as a pony boy. References in Ringling Bros. employee ledgers list him as a ring stock man for 1906, 1908 and 1909. During this time it is known that he trained the horse, "Slack Beauty," owned by Mrs. Al Ringling and featured on the show.

He was on Howe's Great London in 1910 and the following year he appeared on the Robinson Famous

Shows, serving both as ring stock superintendent and presenter of performing ponies with Ralph Houser. Riding "Brock" he was also one of four manege riders. After that show closed, late in 1911 he moved to the Mighty Haag Shows where he also was on the roster for 1912. Smith returned to Howe's Great London for 1915 where Nettie Greer, R. H. Dockrill and he rode a trio of beautiful black steeds through unusual ring work with different dances. For the years 1917 through 1922, except for 1918 when he was a jockey race rider on Hagenbeck-Wallace, he was on John Robinson's Circus. He first rode in a high school horse act on John Robinson's in 1917. He also had a liberty horse act and a dog act.



John Smith on Sells-Floto in 1924. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

For both 1920 and 1921 John Robinson's featured two comedy bareback riding acts, one presented by Cecil Lowande and Company and the other by Joe Hodgini. For both of these years Smith rode in the Joe Hodgini Act with the likes of Irene Montgomery, James McCammon, Etta Hodgini, Ben Burkhead



John Smith on Cole Bros. in 1943.

and Nettie Dill. In 1920 he was also an assistant to Fred Ledgett, the equestrian director. The following year, along with Bernie and Herman Griggs, he presented a stubborn and unrideable mule in funny antics. He was one of the manege riders, the others being Cecil Lowande, Hilda and Oneida Nelson, Nettie Dill, Irene Montgomery, Blanch Reed, Herman Griggs and Tetu Robinson.

In 1922, in addition to again riding high school with a group of ten, he presented a liberty horse act opposite Mme. Bedini in the center ring and Fred Ledgett in the alternate end ring. He was also superintendent of the ring stock.

Commencing in 1923 and for every year through 1929, except for one year on Sparks Circus in 1927, John Smith was on Sells-Floto. During most of these seasons he rode high school in groups of up to 36 in number in addition to being a horse trainer and presenting other acts. In 1924 he had a camel and pony act and high diving dogs and monkeys in addition to a liberty horse act with 12 bays. Two other 12 horse liberty acts were presented by Joe Miller and Fred Collier. Sells-Floto had 36 mili-

tary horses in 1925, performed in groups of 12 each by Katherine Thompson, John Smith and Joe Miller. These beautiful animals were evenly divided among Arabians, sorrels and blacks. In March of 1925 a riding school under the direction of John Smith, assisted by Joe Miller, Charles D. Brown and Katherine Thompson, was established at the Peru quarters. Instruction was free to the ladies who were trying out. Those who proved to be adept were given places in the regular manege numbers on the show. For 1926 as well as 1928 and 1929 Smith performed with dogs and monkeys, bucking mules and liberty horses besides riding manege. In 1926 display #9 had dog and monkey actors presented by Albert Webber, John Smith, Fred Collier and Gordon Orton. They flanked the big feature display of Siberian tigers handled by Aaga Christensen. In the fancy riding display were Gordon Orton, Fred Collier, Smith and Mr. Webber. Additional features presented by John Smith for 1929 were ponies and riding collies, liberty ponies and football mules.

In December of 1926 at Tuscon Arizona, Smith married Edythe Thomason, also known as La Verne Hauser, a rider with Sells-Floto.

Sparks Circus claimed John Smith's attention in 1927. Bert Mayo, the equestrian director, worked a 16 horse liberty act and two 6 horse liberty and rotation acts were worked by John and La Verne Smith. She also had a 7 Indian leopard offering and rode "Hottentot," a high jumper. John and La Verne were 2 of the 15 riders of high, jumping and broad jumping horses. Dogs, monkeys and ponies were shown by Jack Casteel and John Smith and football horses by Bert Mayo and Smith. That year Sparks Circus furnished the entire program for the Zenobia Shrine in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

In February of 1928 La Verne Hauser Smith returned to Peru, Indiana from California where she had bought a home in Hollywood. She assisted her husband in breaking the stallion, "Sir Christopher," which she was scheduled to ride on Sells-Floto in the coming season. She also planned to work her 12 white



John Smith on Cole Bros. Circus in 1943.

liberty horses. Along with other horses, John Smith broke another black stallion, "Col. Lindbergh," which he would ride.

The Al G. Barnes Circus went out in 1930 for the first time under Ringling management. John Smith was on the show as a horse trainer and worked liberty horses there for the next five years. The first year he arrived early at quarters and with Mark Smith proceeded to break stock. During that season he presented cream colored liberty horses opposite Mark Smith who had spotted ones. In 1931 the four high school riders in the Persia and Pageant of Pekin Spec were Mark and Stella Smith, John Smith and Rhea Jack. In R#1 and R#2 liberty horses were shown by John and Mark Smith with Ova Thornton and her Shetland ponies appearing in the arena.

From 1932 through 1934 Smith and Robert Thornton directed the liberty horse acts. In 1932 in addition to a 12 horse liberty act, Smith had a camel act and rode a gaited horse on the hippodrome track where he was joined by other riders, Ova Thornton, Rhea Jack, Irene McAfee and Alma Taylor. In addition, Smith was the ring master for the Belmont Riding Troupe, which was composed of Jack and Irene McAfee, Mr. and Mrs. Healy and Rhea Jack. Jack McAfee did the clowning for this group. Gaited horses were ridden by Smith,

Ova Thornton, Rhea Jack and Alma Taylor in both 1933 and 1934. In 1934 Smith, as horse trainer, was joined by Milton Herriott and Merle Rittenour.

The newly framed Cole Bros. Circus of Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell was launched from Rochester, Indiana in 1935. The show held John Smith's attention as principal horse trainer and performer for the next 16 years through the Chicago Stadium date for 1951. The only exception was in 1938 when he was sent over to Robbins Bros. as a trainer and presenter of liberty horses. In a herald for that year he was featured as the director of a 70 horse act in 3 rings. Smith with 3 women assistants also performed with the original John Robinson elephants. On that show Mrs. John Smith (Gladys Wikoff) rode high school and high jumping horses and had a tandem high school unit in the daily street parade.

In preparation for that first season on Cole Bros., Smith arrived in Rochester in November of 1934 and began his horse training chores. Over the years on Cole Bros., among others, he was joined in presenting liberty acts by Adolph Delbosq (1940, 1941, 1942), Bruce Campbell (1942), Mahlon "Albam" Campbell (1946, 1947), Paul Nelson (1946, 1947), Giustino Loyal (1940), Rudy Rudynoff (1941), Milton Herriott (1950) and John Herriott (1950). Some of those who rode gaited and saddle horses with him on the show were Jack Joyce (1937), Catherine Barrie (1942), J. C. Campbell (1942), Hazel King (1942), Paul Nelson (1942, 1946), Shirley Barren (1942), Jean Allen (1942), "Alabama" Campbell (1946, 1947), Gee Gee Engesser (1946), Marion Knowlton (1946, 1947), Ruth Nelson (1946, 1947), Milton Herriott (1947) and Bobby Donovan (1947). On February 14th, 1937 John Smith married Gladys Wikoff at Rochester, Indiana. She was one of the manege riders on the show.

Some horse trainers with whom John Smith collaborated while on Cole Bros. were: Merritt Belew (1935), H. J. MacFarlan (1935), Jorgen Christiansen (1935), "Alabama" Campbell (1935), Adolf Delbosq (1940) and Milton Herriott (1947, 1950).

One of his unique equestrian displays involved his famous boxing horses, "Taster Cloud" and "Easter Boy." Each of these white horses was fitted with a pair of boxing gloves for its front feet. Standing on their hind legs facing each other at close range while under the control of their trainer, they went through a parody of sparring or boxing. This act was presented from 1944 until 1948. Other equestrian accomplishments of Smith included a rearing horse marching on the reins around the hippodrome track, waltzing and rearing horses, pint-sized ponies in intricate and difficult drills and 72 horses in one display (1939).

Some of the famous saddle horses for which he is remembered are "King Cole" (1935), "Lee Rose McAdams" (1947), "Chief of Owensboro" (1947) and "Silver Cloud" (1942, 1947). In January of 1951 he was off on a buying trip for new liberty horses for Cole Bros. and purchased "Jack Morris." Later that year in September he was on Barnes Bros. Circus presenting liberty horses.

In 1954 Captain John Smith, as he affectionately had come to be known, at the age of 75 years began three seasons of touring with King Bros. Circus. That year he was superintendent of ring stock. During the regular season the liberty acts were presented by Matt Laurish, Harry Rooks and A. W. Kennard. On the opening day for 1954 Milton Herriott worked the magnificent 10 horse liberty act purchased from Cole Bros.

By January of the next year the stock at quarters was being worked by Matt Laurish, John Smith and Harry Rooks. Other trainers at quarters were Toni Smaha, Curley Miller and Lawrence Gibson. That year the liberty horses were directed by Toni and Inga Smaha and John Smith. Smith was again superintendent of ring stock and offered a monkey act. During the 1956 season he presented pony drills. When King Bros. failed in mid-season 1956, Barney Bros. Circus was created with some of King Bros. equipment and with performers from the previous show. John Smith continued there with his liberty horses and ponies. Late that year and also in 1957 he presented a military pony drill on Clyde Bros. Circus.



Cole Bros. boxing horses litho first used in 1944.

In addition to the tented circuses with which Capt. John Smith appeared over the years, in the off-seasons he also performed his pony acts, liberty horse acts or high school horses on a number of indoor shrine shows. In his last years he made his home at the Paul Kelly quarters at Peru, Indiana. For 1960, working for Kelly, he had pony drills at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Three years later, he showed liberty horses on the Hippodrome International Circus at Palisades Park, New Jersey and also had horses at the West Virginia Centennial Circus (Hetzer and Dick).

John Smith died at the Kelly farm on June 20, 1969 at the age of 90 years and was buried at Showman's Retreat in Peru, Indiana.

Mahlon Frank "Alabama" Campbell

For at least twenty-eight years this horse trainer and performer was associated with many circuses. Early records show him as a ring stock superintendent on Sells-Floto in 1927, 1929, 1931 and 1932. He and Blackie Diller were getting the ring stock in shape in April of 1932 at the Peru, Indiana quarters.

In 1934 he was assistant superintendent of ring stock on the Sam B. Dill Circus. When Terrell and Adkins' Cole Bros. Circus went out in 1935

Campbell was boss ring stock man with 24 assistants. The liberty horses were presented by Joe Hodgini, Jorgen Christiansen (center ring) and John Smith. In December of that year Campbell and John Smith were getting the ring barn in shape for training for the coming season. For ten more seasons on Cole Bros. his career and that of Smith closely complimented each other.

In 1936 Campbell was again boss ring stock man while the liberty horses were handled by John Smith, Jack Joyce (center ring) and James Forster. The next year there was only one liberty horse act, that of Jorgen Christiansen with 24 horses and Charles Hunter was superintendent of ring stock. Mahlon was back again in 1938 with the ring stock while the liberty acts were introduced by John Farthing, Jorgen Christiansen (center ring with 24 Palominos) and James Forster. On Robbins Bros. for that season John Smith in the center ring had the liberty horses and Clarence Canary and Frank Schmidt had ponies in the end rings.

In 1939 Campbell was horse trainer on the Bud E. Anderson Circus. From 1941 through 1948 he was back on Cole Bros. During that time he served as a horse trainer as well as superintendent of stock. In 1941 a Richard Campbell was listed as one of three liberty horse presenters and in 1942 the liberty horse display was in the hands of John Smith, Adolph Delbosq and a Bruce Campbell. In July of 1942 Freddie Freeman in his circus gossip column said: "Those two southern boys - John Smith and Alabama Campbell-feuding again. John cants help it if he is a good horse trainer and handsome too."

By 1943 "Alabama" was definitely working a sorrel liberty act, the other two liberty acts being those of Paul Nelson with Palominos in center ring and John Smith with a new black and white act. Campbell had also broken a new pony drill.

The following season featured the same trio of liberty horse acts. John Smith and Mahlon were both fine horse trainers. Both chewed tobacco. Both were jealous of each other.

The identity of these two individuals is not known. Both of these names could have referred to Mahlon Campbell who was on Cole Bros.



Mahlon Frank "Alabama" Campbell on Cole Bros. Circus.

Circus in both 1941 and 1942.

Together that season they had the boxing horses, Campbell with one and Smith with the other. The horses stood on their hind legs, boxed, rested, stood up again, then came a knockout. The act was a real crowd pleaser for horse lovers. The big show would be watching these two men working the act. Both were always arguing and, if one didn't know better, you would think they were ready to fight themselves.

In February of 1945 Mahlon Campbell and John Smith were on the road with several Cole Bros. horse units playing Orrin Davenport indoor dates. When the regular season opened Mahlon continued as superintendent of ring stock and presented a liberty horse act. On June 28 he joined Harry Hammil and Ben Davenport's new Austin Bros. Circus at Kankakee, Illinois to be in charge of liberty and manege stock.

Campbell was back on Cole Bros. in 1946. That year Paul Nelson directed 12 Palomino liberty horses from the saddle in the center ring. John Smith and Mahlon Campbell presented eight horses in each of the end rings. John Smith presented the boxing horses and also the jitterbug horse, "Easter Cloud." Six 5-gaited horses appeared on the track ridden by Campbell, Gee Gee Engesser, John Smith, Don Beall, Marion Knowlton and Ruth Nelson. That

winter from December 26th to January 4, 1947 Mahlon had liberty ponies and liberty horses at the first International Circus in the Chicago Coliseum.

The same three liberty horse groups as in 1946 were also employed in 1947. Three and 5-gaited horses were ridden by Ruth Nelson, Marion Knowlton, Bobbie Donovan, Milt Herriott, John Smith and Mahlon Campbell. Mahlon's mount was the spirited "Chief of Owensboro." That year Campbell and Milt Herriott presented liberty Shetland ponies at the Al Sirat Grotto Circus in Cleveland, Ohio and Mahlon had a ring of liberty horses. Campbell performed liberty acts at the Ararat Shrine in

Kansas City, Missouri and the Moslem Temple Shrine in Detroit. He was also at the second International Circus in the Chicago Coliseum from December 26, 1947 until January 4th.

In 1948 for a third consecutive season Paul Nelson, John Smith and Mahlon Campbell simultaneously presented three liberty acts. John Smith had "Easter Cloud" and "Easter Boy" in the center ring and Mahlon presented a pony act. One day in June the ponies went on strike and decided to do their act on the track instead of in the ring. Mahlon was one of five riders of 3 and 5-gaited horses.

After having worked equine numbers earlier in the spring on Mills Bros. Circus, on May 1, 1949 he again joined Cole Bros. for the season as horse trainer.

In the interval from 1950 through 1955 Campbell spent five seasons on Mills Bros. Circus. In 1950 he and Bert Wallace each had pony drills and riding dogs and monkeys.

Mahlon also rode a manege act and was the superintendent of ring stock in both 1950 and 1951. In the latter year he presented liberty horses on the Hamid-Morton Circus when it played the Sy-

racuse, New York Shrine date. There were three waltzing liberty horse groups on Mills Bros. in 1953. They were directed by Jinx Adams Nelson, Paul Nelson (center ring) and Mahlon Campbell. Sandor Beketow and Mahlon presented pony drills in both 1953 and 1954. Campbell also had a military pony drill on Mills Bros. in 1955.

Merritt Lynn Belew (1884-1967)

Anyone who has seen John Herriott's marvelous liberty horse presentations cannot help but be impressed by the graceful and smooth flowing exit signature to those acts. With the horses running in single file along the ring curb, as the last in line reaches the ring entrance it is cued to turn to the left through 270 degrees and exit the ring. On the next circuit, again the last one does likewise until only one horse remains. This one runs past the entrance, as though he forgot what he was to do, then is cued to back to the entrance and depart as the ones before him. John learned this graceful routine from his father. Milton Herriott who in turn had gotten the idea in the 1920's from Merritt Belew while on Christy Bros. Belew had picked up the trick from the equine trainer, Austin King.

Belew was a noted trainer and performer of liberty and high school horses as well as an experienced equestrian director. He was trainer with Charles and Barney Crooks on Norris & Rowe in 1909 and was equestrian director in 1910 until the show folded early in the season. On that show he did a mule hurdle and also a four horse act. In the official program listing we find in display

Merritt Belew on the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1923.



#10 R#2 Miss Bessie Koontz and Everett Grandall in poses on pedigree ring horses; Merritt Belew in a "delectable demonstration" of horsemanship and Charles G. Clark in animated poses on galloping horses. After leaving Norris & Rowe, Belew went to Howe's Great London for the remainder of 1910 with a six horse act and a comedy mule hurdle act. In 1911 after an unsuccessful season of eight weeks with Masterson Railroad Shows, which closed at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, Merritt joined the Young Buffalo Wild West. He did a new act imitating an inebriated cowboy and finished with regular principal riding on a bronco in an open arena. He also did a high school horse act. The next year, after touring with Young Buffalo Wild West and Col. Cummins Far East & Indian Congress, he joined Bud Atkinson Wild West and traveled to Australia.

In July of 1913 he arrived back in the United States with Ray Thompson's high school horses including the famous "Joe Bailey," which he had taken there the year previously. He was a great success in Australia. While there he married Rosalie Dalcum, one of J. C. Williamson's soubrettes.

Belew divided his time in 1915 between the Frank A. Robbins Circus and Hugo Bros. Riding on Hugo Bros. were Mesdames Ray Thompson, Harry Ryan and Rosalie Belew. In addition, Rosalie was prima donna on the track, mounted on a beautiful horse as she sang *There's A Little Spark of Love Still Burning* accompanied by the circus band. Merritt was superintendent of properties. He spent the 1916 and 1917 seasons on Sparks Circus. In 1916 he was the

Merritt Belew in the Downie Bros. winter quarters.



trainer of the horses and ponies and sold tickets on the #2 pit show. In 1917 Lewis Reed and Merritt Belew had the elephants.

After the year of 1920 on Robert W. Bullard's Trained Animal Show as equestrian director, he joined Christy Bros. for 1921. There he rode in a manege act which included Pearl Gibbons, Mabel James (mother of Harry James), Gertrude Dennis and Robert Cook. Belew also had a goat act. Becoming chief horse trainer on Al G. Barnes in 1922, he remained there through 1923. On February 19, 1922 he married Ione Nita "Slondie" Buchanan in San Francisco. She was an equestrienne and wild animal performer on the show.

In 1922 Belew and Austin King presented twin 12 horse liberty acts in two rings. Cloaked in a red costume with gold braid, Belew presented an equine act that included "every maneuver imaginable including mental calculations." Simultaneously, in the arena Nellie Roth worked a troupe of pumas. The manege offering was under the direction of Austin King and Belew. It included thirty men and women riders. Later, Joe Miller introduced camels and Merritt zebras in opposite rings. In two rings Belew and King also showed ponies performing on revolving tables. In the arena Nita presented an animal act consisting of two tigers, a bear, a pony, a goat and a dog. In other numbers she either had a horse working with a lioness or she directed a group of liberty ponies.

The next year Belew and Mark Sabel each presented liberty horse troupes of 12, one of spotted horses and the other cream colored, respectively. The high school riding was described as follows: "Al G. Barnes' horse really danced to scores furnished by Rummell's Band, sedate

waltz, snappy two step, stately march, reckless abandon of jazz step. Belew's horse in a raggy jazz number completely encircled the rings. Katherine Thompson on a blooded bay Arabian stallion

waltzed down the track and then to prove it was not of another age punctuated each round of waltzing by rearing up on its hind legs and striking out. Ova Thornton had her horse walk on its hind legs before the entire section of reserved seats."

From 1924 until 1929 Merritt and Nita were on Christy Bros. He served as equestrian director each year and presented ponies and liberty horses. She worked with elephants and at times had a dog act. In 1925 there were three groups of 12 liberty horses each, trained by Belew. He was also in charge of 26 manege horses. Nita had a riding leopard act and a single elephant act. She also worked one of the big liberty acts.

In 1926 Christy Bros. Circus was under a 140 round top with 4-50's. On June 26th it was enlarged to a 25 car show. Display #7 of the performance featured three groups of 12 liberty horses. Charles Russell in R#1 with sorrels, Jim Williams in R#3 with spotted horses and Belew in the center ring with 12 grays. He worked his act with empty hands, that is without a whip. The big 40 horse manege number was in display #25 in all rings, arenas and on the track. Songs were set to a chorus and ballet steps were executed by the riders, intermingled with horse maneuvers. It closed with excellent cake walking and dancing by the horses. Among the featured riders were Belew, Charles Russell, Dorothy Campbell and Loa O'Wesney. Nita Belew was one of five elephant workers and presented a leopard riding on an elephant. This was the year of the September tragedy at Gadsen, Alabama when 15 horses in parade lineup were electrocuted by falling high tension wires.

In November of 1926 Belew framed a small overland show to travel to rural towns in Louisiana. It included Tex Chenette and his wild west with 20 head of stock.

Before the Christy show went out in 1927 Nita had entirely recovered from injuries sustained when her horse slipped and fell on her in winter quarters. That season there was an 18 pony drill in three rings presented by Prof. Casteel, Merritt Belew and Frank Leonard. The act closed with 3 ponies walking on their hind legs all the way around the hip-

podrome track. In another presentation there were two 4 horse acts, Merritt Belew in R#1 and Frank Leonard in R#3. There were three groups of liberty horses, 12 in each group, worked by Gordon Orton, Nita and Merritt Belew. All of the horses had been broken and trained by Belew. In Merritt's center ring offering, the 12 Arabian liberty horses in their finale found their proper places in numerical sequence after having been thoroughly mixed as they entered the ring. Also, the animals half walked on the ring curb with either their front or their back feet. Nita Belew had her leopard riding an elephant. She was also one of eight women showing posing horses. The big manege act featured 19 women including Nita Belew and Hazel Logan (Hazel King) and 5 men including Gordon. Orton and Tex Chenette. Merritt Belew and Miss Casteel rode the two featured steeds. Belew directed a barnyard act with eleven performers working with such unlikely subjects as rabbits, goats and sheep, pigs, chickens and roosters and the see-saw geese of Hazel Logan and Nita Belew. Elephants performed under the direction of Myrtle Davis and Nita. Merritt had other specialties such as football horses and leaping greyhounds. The performance ended in a hunting scene with 16 riders, both ladies and gentlemen, in high jumping and broad jumping on a country club lawn setting.

Merritt Belew, equestrian director on the 1945 Clyde Beatty Circus.

In 1928 Christy Bros. had 12 elephants, 12 camels and 27 parade vehicles. Everett James was the bandmaster and Belew presented his liberty horses. This was also the year that on Monday, July 2 a bit of circus history was made.

On that single day the circus showed in two different towns 51

miles apart at Wolf Point and Glasgow, Montana.

In 1929 Merritt Belew was in charge of 100 performing horses. He worked a pony act (1 of 5) and a liberty act. Nita had a dog act (1 of 6 women) and rode manege. She rode the horse, "Fashion," doing the "Charleston." That year the big top was a 140 plus 3-40's and 2-50's with 5 rings and 2 permanent steel arenas in rings #2 and #5.

In 1930 the Belews went to Sells-Floto where he rode manege and had one of the three liberty acts, along with John Agee and Rudy Rudynoff. In 1930 Sells-Floto was a very large circus under a 166 round big top plus 5-50's, 14 foot side walls, 10,000 seats, 3 rings and 2 stages.

Leaving the Peru quarters early the next spring, Merritt was with John White at Downie Bros. quarters in Macon, Georgia preparing for the new circus season. They had the heads of stock going through their paces in the open air rings. Merritt had his eight horse liberty act working in mid-season form and the manege horses under his training were ready. Other numbers to be presented by Belew were a riding dog and monkey act, the Bibbs Co. pigs and manege. There were to be pony drills by John White and Nita as well Nita's dog act and her manege presentation. After one successful season with Downie Bros., Nita and Merritt rejoined for 1932.

In 1933 and 1934 the Belews were principally on George W. Christy's motorized Lee Bros. Circus. In 1933 Merritt presented a pig act and camel act as well as ponies, a 12 horse liberty act and dancing horses. In addition he served as program and equestrian director. At the season's end Belew became manager of the Gulf Coast Riding Academy in Houston and Nita was an instructor. In addition to a string of horses, he was breaking goats and pigs for local

sportsmen. The stables were owned by Ira L. Nix, once on Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West.

With the coming of the new year Merritt and Nita were off with a Christy unit on a Hawaiian tour with E. K. Fernandez. A month later they were back at training quarters helping to get Lee Bros. World's Largest 25 Cent Wild Animal Show ready for the road. Merritt served as program and equestrian director on this motorized operation which had fifty trucks and trailers. He also presented an eight horse liberty act and rode a high school horse. Nita worked elephant and clown dog acts and rode high school. In November they had returned to the Christy quarters.

The remaining years of their circus careers were spent on a different show practically each year and sometimes on more than one show in a single year. For example, in 1935 from January to April Belew was associated with John Smith at the Cole Bros. training barns working liberty horses and matching 24 manege horses with women riders. During the regular circus season Merritt and Nita were on Lewis Bros. Circus. He was horse trainer, ring stock boss and equestrian director, presented six large liberty ponies and rode a high jumping horse on the hippodrome track. Nita had a dog act and rode manege. In November Hamid-Morton showed under canvas, 120 round plus 3-50's, in Houston. The ordinary capacity was 5,720 but for performances there 7,500 were crowded under the canvas. There were Christy's liberty horses, trained and presented by Belew. Nita was superintendent of wardrobe. By the year's end, Belew was at Christy's South Houston quarters training a load of West Texas horses that had just been received.

Hagenbeck-Wallace's last season was 1938. It utilized a big top 160 plus 3-60's and featured 26 elephants. That year Frank B. Miller and Belew were the horse trainers. Merritt rode in the 21 member manege number under the general direction of Miller.

In 1945 Belew was equestrian director of the Clyde Beatty truck circus.

In 1947 Merritt and Nita Belew



were living at the Frank Walter quarters in Houston. Twenty years later in August Merritt Belew died in the city where he had retired, Phoenix, Arizona. His widow, Nita (1893-1979), died at a rest home in Phoenix on October 2, 1979 after a long illness.

Austin B. King (-1935)

Austin B. King was a prominent trainer, mostly of horses and zebras, who spent the major portion of his career on the Al G. Barnes Circus. He is not to be confused with Austin C. King, who held executive positions on a number of circuses including Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, Al G. Barnes and Wirth Bros. of Australia. He was a side show manger on Al G. Barnes in the 1920's at a time when our subject was also there as a trainer and performer. He had the position of side show lecturer on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey from 1935 until 1939. Early in his career he had been a clown on Sun Bros. (1912), on Al G. Barnes (1921) and on Sells-Floto (1922, 1923). He was also press agent on Al G. Barnes in 1924 and 1925. His home was in San Francisco, where he died in 1947.

Early records place Austin B. King on Ringling Bros. Circus in 1903 as a groom where his wages were \$6 per week and his total annual earnings were \$141. By the next year he was listed on the same show as a horse trainer, high school horse rider and a performer with a mule.

In 1905, 1906 and 1908 he was on the roster of Norris & Rowe. In the first of these years he was one of two jockey race riders and a bareback rider, one of 10 including William Dutton. Three years later he rode Roman style while driving 31 other horses on the hippodrome track. That same year he again rode a jockey act and a bareback act as well as manege. Hagenbeck-Wallace claimed King in 1907 for high school and manege riding and the Roman standing races.

Lucile King was the wife of Austin. She was first mentioned as the rider of a high school horse on the Rhoda Royal Circus in 1910. Both of them were again riders on that show, then called the Big Rhoda Royal 2 Ring Circus, Hippodrome and Old Buffalo

Wild West, in the winter season of 1911-1912. They were in a twelve-member manege act. Austin rode a high school horse on Buffalo Bills's Wild West in the regular season of 1911. After an early engagement on the Rhoda Royal Circus in the spring of 1912, when Lucile again rode a high school horse, the Kings turned to Sell-Floto for the rest of that season and the following seasons through 1915.

In 1913 in Display #12, R #1 Kitty Kelly, Lucile King and Viola Donovan rode high school. Flo Robinson, Fred Collier and Austin King did the same in R#3. In addition, Austin presented 4 liberty horses in R#1 of Display #18. In 1914 Austin King and Fred Collier each had a 4 horse liberty act and Lucile King was a rider.

In 1915 Sells-Floto exhibited a group of rare and fearsome animals known as the Five U. S. Government Hyneys. They were crosses between a Grevy's zebra and a burro from the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. The result was a beast with the striped body of a zebra with the uncertainty and viciousness of that jungle animal and the head of a Missouri mule with all the contrariness of that creature. After long months of training they did well in rehearsals but not in performances. For instance, at performance time they would enter the big top on a trot and might keep right on going, escaping onto the circus grounds and about the town doing damage to yards and gardens and causing runaways of teams. Austin King was put in charge of the training and showing of these animals. He also rode a high school horse, as did his wife, and he served as equestrian director. Lucile worked in a statue horse act.

King went to the Al G. Barnes Circus as a new equestrian director in April of 1916. He immediately got busy breaking an act of 5 thoroughbred zebras. It was then claimed that this was the first time that an act of this sort had ever been produced. He and his wife were also trainers of horses and ponies. He was assisted in his equestrian director responsibilities by Robert Thornton. Lucille was

a high school horse rider. The Kings remained on Al G. Barnes through 1928. In the next several years they were prominently represented on the program.

In 1917 Austin had liberty ponies in display #2 and later in the program had hind leg walking ponies on the track with "Shrimp" Settler. He presented posing horses in the arena together with Bert Dennis and Doc E. J. Webber and later he introduced 4 zebras in the arena. Austin and Lucille rode manege and high school horses. He also had a monkey principal act. Austin was breaking a new group of dancing horses, one of which

was "King George," the original Hula Hula horse. In addition he served as parade marshall with Bert Dennis as his assistant.

Two years later the grand finale of the performance was the flag team driven at full gallop on the track by Austin King, dressed as Uncle Sam. He rode Roman standing style driving 10 palominos. A huge American flag streamer covered the sides of the horses from the breasts of the leaders to the tails of the last pair. All of this was accompanied by the circus band playing the *Star Spangle Banner*.

This feature was repeated in 1920 as the "Yankee Doodle Flag Team." Closing the performance it ran on the hippodrome track after Mabel Stark had gone up with the balloon lion. Again the long Yankee flag ran down both sides of the team with Austin King as Uncle Sam standing on the wheel pair of horses. It went "hell for leather" around the track with Eddie Woeckner's band playing *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

Each year King continued working with zebras. In 1922 in his white and gold costume, he presented six performing zebras in addition to a troupe of 12 liberty horses. He also had a team of zebu and llamas. In two rings Merritt Belew and Austin King presented ponies on revolving tables. There were 32 in the manege act, beautiful riders on dancing horses, under the direction of Belew and King. As if this were not enough, in the arena King presented a leopard riding on the back of a zebra. This



was the year that Al G. Barnes, himself, rode around the hippodrome track on "Tusko."

Very early in the season of 1923 Austin King was briefly on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in Madison Square Garden riding a high school horse. For the rest of that season he was back on Al G. Barnes as the zoological director.

After spending time at quarters in 1925 with Max Sabel, Carl Bruce and Fred Santori breaking new broncos and manege horses, Austin King was off to Honolulu in February with an Al G. Barnes performing elephant act. Back on the show for the regular season, King featured a 12 zebra liberty act in addition to his 12 horse liberty act. In October, back at the Palms, California quarters, King and Carl Bruce had well in hand the two car loads of horses recently received there.

In 1926 King had somewhat detached duties. In July he was sent to New York to bring back twelve stallions recently shipped from Asia Minor. On September 4 he was sent to Hollywood with 12 zebras, returning to the show on September 18 from the DeMille Studios. Along with these duties, he and Max Sable were training the liberty horses and zebras.

In 1927 and 1928 Mark Smith and Max Sabel presented the liberty horses in 2 troupes of 12 each. In 1928 E. W. Jackson and Austin King worked the elephants.

Austin King left the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1929 and 1930 to be instructor in horsemanship on Hagenbeck-Wallace. In 1929 he had a center ring zebra act. The following year he again had zebras. Also, Earl Sutton and King each presented a liberty horse act.

In 1933 King was the announcer at the Los Angeles Shrine Circus. At that time he was operating a training stable near Los Angeles.

The 1935 Al G. Barnes program again had listings for Austin King. He had finally come back home to the Barnes show, then under Ringling management. The offerings in dis-

play #11 were: R#1-liberty horse act-Austin King; R#2-30 horse liberty act-Margaret Gorman; R#3-liberty horse act-Roland Simpson. In display #22 Austin King presented his zebra act.

Unfortunately, Austin King was not there for much of the season as he died of coronary thrombosis at Jefferson Hospital in Los Angeles on April 2, 1935. He was survived by a brother and a sister in Waco, Texas.

Alvin Ray Thompson (circa 1880-1963)

Ray Thompson was an expert trainer and presenter of high school, manege and liberty horses in the circus ring as well as an instructor in horsemanship. In addition, at times he possessed troops of saddle horses that were employed on various circuses. He was born at Fort Madison, Iowa and at one time his home was in Menomonie, Wisconsin.



A 1908 Buffalo Bill Wild West lithograph featuring Ray Thompson. Circus World Museum collection.

Three of his wives, Minnie and Kathryn Thompson and Dorothy Herbert, were outstanding riders of saddle horses. Much of what these young women accomplished was probably due to his inspiration and instruction.

Although it has been stated that he started on Ringling Bros. in 1898, the earliest documented reference to Ray's career was on the Great Rhoda Royal Shows for 1900 where the Thompson boys were listed as rough

riders. In 1902 he was a jockey race rider and clown on Ringling Bros. By 1904 he had turned to Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. where the program had the following listings: Display #10, R#3- Absolutely new and original high school double equestrian manege performance of exceptional excellence. Mr. Thompson and Miss Milton conclude with supplemental equestrian cake walk on the hippodrome track. Display #12-On hippodrome track Mr. Raymond Thompson will give exhibition with his champion high jumping horses, blue ribbon beauties of the American field.

Display #16, R#3 Raymond Thompson's bareback hurdle act on his intelligent mule.

In 1906 Ray Thompson and his wife, Minnie, rode high school horses on Barnum & Bailey. He had his troupe of high school equestrians and he also presented a 6 horse liberty

act. Virgil Thompson presented a horse which sat up on his haunches and Mrs. Minnie Johnson rode side saddle. Ray Thompson originated the full body layback on a rearing bridleless horse and used it since the show's opening at Madison Square Garden. Minnie drove a haute école horse in a road cart.

Thompson was with Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1907 and 1908, and on Buffalo Bill's Wild West & Pawnee Bill's Great Far East (1909-1911) for all or parts of these seasons. The Thompsons, leading features on Buffalo Bill's Wild West, sailed from New York on the Minnehaha on December 7, 1907 to open with their horses at the Crystal Palace in London. Minnie rode her celebrated black mare, "Irmage," without bridle or rein, in a high school act while Ray was on "Joe Bailey," the most wonderful saddle horse in the world.

In the spring of 1908 before the show reopened, Thompson was at Dallas putting his horses through their paces doing the Spanish walk or march, kneeling on one knee, lying

down, sitting up, rearing and walking several feet on their hind legs.

The next year Ray had his trained high school and manege western range horses, including "Joe Bailey." He was declared the world's best trainer of horses. No man could ride "Joe Bailey" like his master. When rider and horse came prancing into the arena it was plain that "Joe" was no ordinary animal. He did the gallop and change, picked up handkerchiefs from the ground, did the Oriental dance and then, satisfied with the applause of the audience, he went down on his bended knees to show his satisfaction to the audience. Also, "Joe Bailey" stood with forefeet at different levels on a high pedestal as Ray was mounted on his back.

In the 1909 official program, there was an interesting and informative article supposedly penned by Ray Thompson: "The range horse, when he came under subjection, demonstrated his stamina, staying powers, and for many decades was the most reliant mount in days, when, like his master, he was forced to forage for his sustenance, be his own provider and commissary and live in all the dangers and rigor of the open. The Ray Thompson troupe of manege Texas horses, tamed, ridden and handled by western girls and ranchmen, present the most finished and remarkable exhibition of the trained class of equestrianism the public has ever seen.

"Thompson's favorite horse, which he introduces in this act, is a Texas-bred animal, named in honor of Senator Joe Bailey of the Lone Star State. This horse not only executes all of the most difficult steps, movements and gaits known to the equestrian world, but has been taught a number of entirely new accomplishments under the saddle, the most marvelous being what is known as the three-legged canter, in which action he carries one forward foot high in the air, gallops up and down the arena without touching the upraised foot to the ground, yet, at the slightest signal from the rider, he reverses his gait from one foot to the other. He also does the cakewalk backwards, introducing a number of eccentric steps and actions, finishing with the 'hoochee-koochee' dance. These wonderfully trained Western



Minnie Thompson, lady manege rider.

ranch horses are put through a series of intricate movements while ridden by wild west girls and cowboys in ranch garb and present a most picturesque scene. The drilling of these well-trained steeds is something entirely different from anything that has heretofore been presented in the horse show arena. The stunts performed are full of life and vigor and both horse and rider seem to enter into the spirit of the performance. In order to show the characteristic non-chalance of western ranchers, the lady riders appear in the side saddle, also the more modern method of riding astride, while some of the girls don the chaps of the typical cowboy and are strikingly graceful and charming representations of physical and equestrian beauty."

That same season of 1909, while on Barnum & Bailey in the Chicago Coliseum, Minnie rode into the arena on a beautiful white horse, "Jupiter," and onto a platform attached to a balloon. Horse and rider ascended to the roof of the building and there in statuesque outline, the mount allowed Mrs. Thompson to acknowledge the plaudit of the audience as both were enveloped in a shower of fireworks coming from the platform. On descending from the dome and appearing as a centaur, she gaily rode about the arena bowing and kissing her hand to the hundreds of people in the audience.

In another number, Minnie Thompson rode her manege horse "Irmage" clear around the arena without a bridle and had him turn round standing on his hind feet, evidencing remarkable high school training. He also performed without a bridle while being ridden in the ring.

In December Minnie made an appearance at the New York Hippodrome. She was a graceful, pretty woman and a fearless rider, sitting on her sidesaddle as though glued to it. The horse went through many evolutions, and at the end, with her knee gripping the horn of the saddle, she leaned back as her horse reared up until her head almost touched the ground, keeping her place on the horse's back with the knee grip alone. This act brought big applause.

Ray was director of the high school horses on the Two Bills' Show in 1910 and 1911. He and his wife rode high school. In 1910 he had ten of his own horses there including "Joe Bailey." They ran the gamut of equestrian exercises. Rhoda Royal also had sixteen of his own horses on the show, each one a star in some particular way. Everything was the same in 1911 except that the number of Ray Thompson's horses had increased to twenty. This troupe was on Young Buffalo Wild West in 1912. His jumping horses featured women sidesaddle riders.

In 1914 a feature ad proclaimed that Ray Thompson's high school horses made up the greatest horse act in the world and were at liberty for park, fair and vaudeville managers. The address was the Booklawn Riding Academy, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

In February of 1915 Thompson closed a deal with Hugo Bros. Shows to join in May for its opening in Cedar Rapids, Iowa under Shriner auspices. The newspaper ads described his act in this way: "Introducing the costliest feature ever presented under tented tops, Ray Thompson's stable of twenty performing wonder horses, including Joe Bailey, the greatest high school horse in the world, the only horse in America that has twice encircled the globe." The reference to twice encircled the globe evidently alludes to

Merritt Belew's taking some of Thompson's high school horses, including the famous "Joe Bailey" to Australia with the Bud Atkinson Wild West in 1912 and his return with them the following year.

Program listings for the 1915 season on Hugo Bros. were: track-wriggle cart-Mrs. Ray Thompson; January acts-Phil King and Ray Thompson; 40 ponies in military drill-Ray Thompson; Ray Thompson's high school horses in three rings and on the track-hurdle mules; high jumping horses-Mrs. Ray Thompson, Rue Meade, John Foley.

About this time Ray's marriage began to fail. Minnie went her own way, continuing to present her daring acts in a most professional manner. For show purposes she retained her name as Minnie Thompson although she twice remarried. On February 22, 1921 she married Albert E. Greene, advertising banner solicitor on Sparks Circus. At the time of her death in 1942 she was the wife of Paul Baker.

After her separation from Thompson, Minnie had a very full career as a circus high school rider. In 1916 on Gentry Bros. she was one of two featured in a troupe of high school riders. On Sells-Floto two years later she was in the big five elephant act, bewildering in a new costume and showing great skill in handling her huge beasts. In the finish of the performance "Snydee" carried the trainer on his tucks while doing a hind leg walk. In addition, she was one of five manege riders.

On Yankee Robinson in 1919 Minnie, riding "Gov. Lee" in a hind leg walk, was billed as America's foremost equestrienne. She was costumed in formal riding habit and boots.

In 1920 Minnie worked with the elephants of Louis Reed on Sparks Circus, was one of five high school riders and was one of two riders of high jumping horses. Continuing in 1921 she was one of four manege riders. That year she received serious injuries when the elephant 'Mutt' went on a rampage at Hardwick, Vermont. For a while it was doubtful whether she would ever ride again, but by January 1 of the next year she was at the

Macon, Georgia quarters working out every day on the high school horses in the ring barn. In the regular season she was back again as a high school rider and elephant worker. The following year she was featured riding "Baron De Belle."

By 1927 Minnie had joined Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey where she was one of ten high school riders on the hippodrome track. She rode side-saddle on a horse for which the pesades were so high the danger of his falling over backwards was ever apparent. She proved herself a daring horsewoman fully worthy of the name. Traditionally, she wore a plain white linen riding habit, beautifully tailored, black boots and a black bowler hat. In May of that year while riding one of her rearing horses, it was claimed that she had burst a blood vessel below her heart. Miraculously, it was further reported that she was able to resume her riding after several days off. With her usual charm and grace as a rider, in 1928 she was not only riding high jumping horses on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey but she had charge of the high school horses.

The next year, until September when she was forced to withdraw because of illness, she was featured on Hagenbeck-Wallace as she rode a horse jumping through hoops of fire.

By 1935, having a number of her horses stabled in the East, she was visiting Narragansett Park. On June 12, 1942 Minnie Thompson Baker died at Bon Secours Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, aged 54. She

Ray and Dorothy (Herbert) Thompson in the mid-1920s.



was survived by her husband.

In the meanwhile Ray Thompson married Kathryn, on April 13, 1917 at Crown Point, Indiana. That year they presented high school horses on Hagenbeck-Wallace. She also rode the bridle-less horse, "Burnister." The Thompsons together with Kathryn's sister, Maude Edwards, were on Coop & Lent Circus in 1918. Kathryn was a rider and Ray was equestrian director. That spring they came to this show from the Hagenbeck-Wallace quarters at Peru, Indiana.

Ray and Kathryn joined Al G. Barnes in 1919. He was appointed principal horse trainer and she performed her great riding act, a new feature in the equestrian ballet. They both continued through the winter season at the quarters at the fairgrounds in Phoenix, Arizona. Here they shared responsibilities for being in charge of the saddle horses. During the early spring they gave lessons at the fairground to persons wishing to learn the art of riding.

The Barnes Show opened on February 28, 1920 at Eastland Park in Phoenix. Soon after, Ray and his family, including the infant, Ray, Jr., left to join Yankee Robinson Circus, which opened in Boone, Iowa on April 22

Ray Thompson's high school horses and his stallions, performing perfectly executed and remarkable drills, were features of a long and varied program on Howe's Great London in 1921. He had moved to Howe's Great London from Yankee Robinson in February of that year. He was one of sixteen high school riders on the show and worked in collaboration with Charles Barry. On Howe's Great London the next year, Kathryn Thompson had a nasty spill in her manege act. As her mount was kneeling for her to mount, she had only one foot in the stirrup when the horse, in attempting to rise, slipped and fell over on her leg and side. In spite of this accident she was up and working in a few days.

In 1923 on Al G. Barnes Kathryn was riding a blooded bay Arabian stallion which "waltzed down the track and then, to prove it was not of another age, punctuated each round of waltzing by

rearing up on his hind legs and striking out." In June of that year Ray and Kathryn were divorced at Peru, Indiana. They had been separated since 1920. Although she later married Charles Bualware, she continued to perform her equestrian acts under the name of Kathryn Thompson.

Kathryn appeared on Sells-Floto in 1924 and 1925 in trick and fancy riding. One of her riding features in 1924 was the lay back as she rode "Kirby Dare" with ease and grace. She was one of twenty-two manege riders on that show and also worked in an elephant display. In 1925 Joe Miller, John Smith and Kathryn each presented a troupe of 12 military liberty horses. She worked the white Arabians. That spring at winter quarters she had assisted in the training of forty high school riders. The instruction was free to all young ladies on the show. For those who became adept, there was a place for them in the regular manege numbers in the season's performance. There is a fine illustration of a large feature lithograph in life size of Kathryn Thompson on the rearing "Kirby Dare." It was posted for the May 15 date in 1925 for Sells-Floto at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Kathryn, in person, is standing in front of the litho holding "Kirby Dare" by the bridle.

Kathryn Thompson at one time also trouped with Hobson family of bareback riders.

Thompson was approximately thirty years older than his next wife, Dorothy Herbert. They performed together in September 1925 on the late season edition of the Gollmar Bros. Circus, a 10 car show. He was a major addition to the performance, furnishing a number of horses and riding acts. Among the performers he was a major item of expense, refusing to work for any less than for \$200 per week. Ray and Dorothy rode manege and did a January mule act. Dorothy in clown make-up drove the mule which was hitched to a cart. It would buck and eventually kick the cart to pieces. At one point she would fall down and the mule would back up and sit on her. The number finished

with the mule jumping over hurdles as she vaulted on and off.

Just when they were married is not clear but it is known that Dorothy was granted a final divorce decree from Ray Thompson on October 18, 1934 by the Court of Mexico in Chihuahua City.



Dorothy Herbert, featured lady rider on Ringling-Barnum in 1934.

Thompson was Dorothy's instructor in circus riding and performing. She described this instructor-student relationship in some detail in her autobiography: "I learned the hard way from one of the cruelest of all trainers, Ray Thompson. He was also considered the greatest of horse trainers at that time.

"He would work a horse and rider until both were ready to drop. If a mistake was made, the lash whip would often miss the horse and hit the rider instead. He was a rather small man with a sort of one-side smile, rather like a sneer. One of his eyes was disfigured and impaired causing him to sometimes squint when talking to you. A horse had reared up and hit him in the face with his front hoof, the same horse that he had blinded in one eye while he was training it. People who disliked him, and there were many, called it just retribution.

"His idol was James Fillis, who had been Ecuyer En Chef to the Central Cavalry School at St. Petersburg. He was acknowledged throughout Europe as the greatest high school rider of all time. He had the honor of

giving private riding exhibitions before the Emperor and Empress of Germany, the Tsar of Russia, the Queen of Belgium and the Emperor of Austria. I was presented with a book by Fillis and had to study it every day. Ray, himself, had been trained by Rhoda Royal, a past master in the art of dressage.

"When I was considered capable, I was given a horse that was completely trained, 'Black Artist.' He was the second best horse in the stable. The best, 'Kentucky Man,' Ray reserved for himself. No one else was allowed to ride him.

"Ray was breaking horses for circus and other trainers. They liked the results of his training, but did not like to have him on their shows on account of his fiery temper and his methods of training.

"The manege horses were the ones that were being trained to go on a circus. These horses were broke to waltz, march, get on a pedestal, side pass and lie down and sit up. They were cued with a whip and anyone can learn to work them with a few days instructions.

"A high school horse is a different matter all together and this was what I was being trained for. The horse responds to bit and spur and the pressure of your legs. Distribution of your body weight also plays a part. In conjunction with all the things a manege horse is taught to do, a well trained high school horse will side-step on the trot, do the Spanish trot, see-saw piaffe, the rock, the forehand, the high extended trot, and rear with the front legs pawing in the air. All this is done without the aid of a whip. Even with one knee and the camel stretch, no whip is carried.

"After my first time over the hurdle, like your first dive into the water, I felt no fear. We jumped a few more times that day and each time the bar was raised a little higher, but not too high, I assure you. Nevertheless, when I dismounted my legs were trembling.

"Before long we were going higher and higher and I now realized the thrill the jumping horse riders in the horse shows felt when they showed their mounts.

"When the owners came to look over their jumpers they were quite

impressed, not only with them but with Ray Thompson's trained horses as well and hired the troop to travel with them. This is how we happened to join Colonel Zack Miller's 101 Ranch Wild West."

Ray Thompson's group of dancing horses was on Sparks Circus in 1926 and Dorothy Herbert was riding manege at Dreamland Park in Newark, New Jersey. The following year she was on Miller Bros. 101 Real Wild West where she learned to do trick riding.

Eldridge and Bentum went out in 1928 with one ring and two stages under a 100 plus 3-30's. It carried 55 horses and ponies and 3 elephants. Dorothy and Ray Thompson were on this show. They both rode manege along with Mae and George Barton, Mrs. Art Eldridge and Frances Haines. The Thompson barnyard pets were presented by Dorothy. Barney Demarest's horses were on the show and George Barton was the equestrian director.

Early in 1929 Ray and his wife were playing indoor circuses. In the regular circus season Dorothy joined John Robinson's Circus where she rode manege and did a novel three horse liberty act. By this time Ray and Dorothy had drifted apart. This situation resulted in their divorce in 1934. Dorothy Herbert went to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey where she remained for nine seasons. (1930-1937 and 1939). She also toured with Cole Bros. in 1938, 1940 and 1941 in addition to a number of smaller shows. She retired in 1972.

Dorothy Herbert's accomplishments as a rider were phenomenal. Starting with the high school waltz and rear, she went eventually to high jumps over fire hurdles without reins while blindfolded. She also rode leaps on her steed, the prancing "Major," over fiery barriers amid a herd of leaping horses as well as prone riding over fire hurdles. On the hippodrome track, she drove a sixteen-horse hitch Roman standing.

Ray Thompson sold a large number of circus parade props, including all his white harness and sulkies, at Peru, Indiana in March of 1934. He went on to have high school horses with Robert B. Stevens' Bailey Bros. early in 1945 and later in that season



Max Sabel on the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1924.

was the equestrian director on Ray Marsh Brydon's Dan Rice Circus. The next year he was horse trainer and had horse acts on Zallee Bros. Circus. His liberty horses appeared on Tom Packs Circus in 1950.

In 1958 he was an employee of the Henly Photo Supply Co. in Kansas City, Missouri. Nolie Henly, formerly of Buffalo Bill's advance, was the proprietor. Still active in 1961 at the age of 83, Ray trained the high school horse, "Gold Crown," the king of the palominos. Ray Thompson died in Kansas City in 1963.

Max Sabel

Max Sabel was a foremost high school rider, presenter of liberty horses and novelty animal acts and a superb horse trainer. The most active portion of his career was between 1917 and 1930. For the last nine years of that interval he was on Al G. Barnes Circus. Prior to that he was on Ringling Bros. in 1917, Yankee Robinson in 1918 through 1920 and on Howe's Great London in 1921.

Minnie Davis and Max Sabel were high school riders on Ringling Bros. in 1917. On Yankee Robinson in the following two years he rode manege and high school horses. In 1919 he broke two eight horse liberty acts and presented high jumping Russian wolfhounds. Using the methods of James Filis he was a foremost trainer working with the thoroughbred chestnut mare "Cousin Francis." In 1920 he was the director of 6 dancing horses and their riders.

In his one season on Howe's Great London he continued presenting the high jumping Russian Wolfhounds and the chestnut mare. Display #9 introduced his Kentucky thoroughbred horse and a Siberian camel in a combination of clever performances. His military horses gave a superb demonstration of the trainer's control.

For his tenure on Al G. Barnes from 1922 through 1930 he was a consistent horse trainer as well as a director of liberty horses and a manege rider. In 1922 he was also superintendent of stock at winterquarters. The following season he presented twelve cream colored horses, one of two groups of liberty horses. In 1925 he was joined by Austin King, Carl Bruce and Fred Santori in breaking horses. In addition to the twelve liberty horses, he presented performing camels and an eight horse tandem act. He also worked with the new broncos and manege horses. Besides his liberty horses, in 1926 he continued to work with the new camels on the show. He was incapacitated for most of the month of July due to injuries suffered from one of his charges.

Besides his horse training duties, for the next three seasons he continued to present liberty horse acts. Sabel was horse trainer on the Honolulu Elks Circus in January of 1928. Later in the regular season the cream colored and spotted liberty horses were worked by Mark Smith and Max Sabel. Max also had charge of the dancing horses. Al G. Barnes in 1929 had Mark and Stella Smith, Max Sabel, Bert Dennis and Pony Clark leading the manege, high school, zebra and camel acts.

The Los Angeles Breakfast Club produced a Breakfast Club Circus in January of 1930. The program included the singing mule, "Jerry," with Dutch Marco, the high school horses of Betty Roth and Max Sabel, aerial ladders by Irene McAfee and the revolving ladders of Jack McAfee and Fay Walcott.

The 1930 Al G. Barnes program featured Sabel with a camel act and a novelty act of two zebus, two giant yaks and an American bison in a lib-

erty routine. With this collection of animals, Max Sabel brought new meaning to the term "exotic animals."

Bert B. Dennis

Bert Dennis was a very versatile animal trainer and performer, working with tigers and leopards, monkeys, ostriches, kangaroos, bears, elephants, zebras, African lions, goats, sheep and dogs as well as mules, ponies and manege and high jumping horses. Principally, his career from 1915 until 1930 alternated between Al G. Barnes and Christy Bros. circuses.

Dennis and his first wife, Adelaide, were performers on Barnes in 1915. They continued on that show through 1919 and presented tigers and leopards in 1916. He was also in charge of the monkeys, ostriches and kangaroos and had a new monkey act. Adelaide was a puma trainer. The next year he served as an assistant parade marshal with Austin King. The list of acts in which he appeared was quite impressive: monkeys, posing horses, riding dogs and monkeys, dogs, high diving dog and monkey, monkey principal riding act, manege, high school rider and riding dogs. Late in the season he added several ponies and monkeys to his big act.

In 1919 Bert Dennis rode the high school stallion, "Valencia King" and also appeared in a characteristic selection of acts: monkey acrobats on the trapeze with Joe Miller; posing horses with Austin King and Mrs. Dopps; riding dogs with Joe Miller; palomino liberty horses opposite Charles Barry's spotted Arabians and Austin King's zebras in the arena; a monkey principal act; riding dogs and breast high jumps on the horse, "Sylvia," with no hands on the bridle or reins.

In 1920 Dennis was equestrian director on Backman & Tinsch Circus.

The next 2 years he was equestrian director of Christy Bros. For 1921 he presented Shetland ponies in one of two groups, had a posing horse act and as Capt. Dennis performed with African lions. The manege riders included Pearl Gibbons, Mabel James (mother of Harry James), Robert Cook, Merritt Belew and

Gertrude Dennis (Bert's second wife). Mabel James and Gertrude were also mounted singers. The next season Bert added five male lions to his lion act to make a total of eleven animals.

Dennis returned to Al G. Barnes from 1923 through 1925. He and Austin King were the horse trainers in 1925. There were two twelve horse liberty acts presented opposite a Zebra act in the center arena. Max Sabel and Dennis had the liberty acts and Austin King the zebras. However, King and Dennis often exchanged places when Bert Dennis went into the arena with the zebras. Bert also had a six pony drill and in the climax of the manege presentation, in a feature of exceptional note, he rode the high hurdle jumping "Sky Rocket." Incidentally, that season three lions, four leopards and three ponies were born on the show.

In 1926 G. W. Christy's Lee Bros. Circus went out on 15 cars. Terrell Jacobs showed a good sized wild animal act. Bert Dennis was equestrian director and performed bucking and jumping mules, leaping hounds and a pony act. Gertrude presented tandem horses, riding dogs and posing horses and ponies.

Bert was horse trainer and equestrian director on Christy Bros. in 1927. Buddy, the Dennis' four year old son, joined the show and he rode hurdles on his pony. Three racing ostriches were a novelty that year. Bert and Gertrude, in the big manege number, introduced the featured buck and wing clog dancing horses.

In July Christy Bros.' acts were taken to the State Prison at Auburn, New York to entertain the inmates. Buddy rode his high jumping pony and Bert presented his liberty horses.

In addition to being on Christy Bros. during the regular season of 1928, Bert and Gertrude in January took a group of acts from the Christy show to Honolulu to appear with E. K. Fernandez. These included a liberty horse act and also bears and elephants, the latter animals worked by Vernon Walker and Bert Dennis.

Dennis returned to Al G. Barnes in 1929 as chief horse

trainer and assistant to the equestrian director, John T. Backman. The manege and high school horses were led by Mark and Stella Smith, Max Sabel, Pony Clark and Bert Dennis. Gertrude rode in the manege act and in a tandem riding presentation. In November Bert and Gertrude were in Venice, California for the winter season.

Early in 1930 Bert, Gertrude and Buddie were back on Christy Bros. However, by the end of March they had returned to Venice, California where he developed an extensive rabbit farm.

Charles Barry and Bessie Harvey (1887-1928)

Charles Barry was an outstanding horse trainer and rider who also worked with a variety of other circus animals, both wild and domestic. They ranged from African lions and polar bears to pigs and greyhounds. Further, he was an accomplished equestrian director. His wife, Bessie Harvey, was an attractive manege rider who also worked with wild animals. However, her main claim to fame was her beautiful soprano voice, that of an early prima donna on Al G. Barnes. There is a photo of her appearing in white riding habit mounted on a white horse in the midst of a huge crowd at the steps of the California state capitol in Sacramento in 1915. She was entertaining the state legislature as she sang *I Love You California*. At one time she had been a member of the San Carlos Opera Company and

Bessie Harvey, lady rider. Circus World Museum collection.



also appeared on the Pantages and Keith Circuits.

The earliest mention of Bessie was in 1913, when in addition to being a performer with elephants on Al G. Barnes, she also helped unload them from the train. For the next couple of years Charles and Bessie were on Barnes. In 1914 he was in charge of a pyramid of thirty performing ponies with the high school horse "Fashion" at the top. Then they both rode manege, Charles on "Colonel" and Bessie on "King George," two of a total of nine riders. Singing as she rode, she was the featured prima donna soprano in "realms of sweet music" as she rendered Peg O' My Heart.

On August 21, 1914 Bessie fell from her horse in the parade at Celina, Ohio, suffering severe injuries. She returned to the show in late September but could not perform due to the seriousness of her injuries. Vera Earle, the Grand Opera and Concert Soprano from the New York Hippodrome, substituted in her absence.

Charles Barry was the equestrian director on Barnes in 1915. He presented two arena acts, a group of bears of mixed breed and a riding hybrid, half lion and half tiger. As prima donna Bessie was a prominent feature of the program. In addition she worked a group of grizzly bears and a troupe of elephants. Bessie Harvey was forced to again leave the show in July, probably due to the injuries suffered when she fell the previous year.

Although Charles Barry in March of 1916 was listed as the equestrian director of Al G. Barnes, by June 17th we find that he was on Sells-Floto. There he rode high school and manege on the hippodrome track. He also presented a statue horse act, rode in the Roman races and was in the wild west concert.

J. Augustus Jones' 1917 Cole Bros. Circus was a nineteen car railroad show. F. J. Rogers was equestrian director and Charles Barry was his assistant. Cheerful Gardner was the elephant boss. Barry presented trained ponies and a riding dog act as well as rode manege. The other riders were Bessie Harvey and Mr. and Mrs., F. J. Rogers. Bessie sang while mounted on horseback as

trained pigeons descended on her from the apex of the big top.

Charles Barry was equestrian director on Yankee Robinson in 1918 until he left on August 30 to enlist in the army near the end of World War I.

In 1919 Bert Rickman was equestrian director on Al G. Barnes. Charles Barry appeared in a number of acts: rode one of the forty dancing horses; six polar bears and a hyena in the arena; military liberty ponies; hind leg walking ponies on the track with Austin King; female Affican lion group in the arena; four spotted Arabian liberty horses; lion riding on elephant in the arena and wrestling bears.

Bessie in the spec, "Queen of Jungleland," was mounted on the largest elephant and sang to the accompaniment of Edward Woekner's band. She led several choruses sung by the entire company. In another display in the arena she presented the Riding Four, a leopard, a dog, a bear and a monkey each mounted individually on large ponies. Prima donna of the big top, she rode the imported white stallion, "King George," as she sang in her beautiful soprano voice. One hundred trained doves were released from various parts of the tent to flock to her head, hands and shoulders and to the neck and back of her mount.

A 1933 Ringling-Barnum lithograph featuring Capt. Barry.



On May 19 and 20 the show played Portland, Oregon. While making parade on the first day of this stand, Bessie Harvey was thrown from her horse and after the fall was run over by a heavy parade wagon that was closely following behind her. The accident resulted in a severely broken arm, later amputated, and a badly fractured leg. In spite of these injuries she returned to the show that season and in September was performing her duties as prima donna from a wheel chair. For this bravery and showmanship she drew a great deal of favorable comment. During her absence Vera Earle again substituted for Bessie in the pigeon and singing number.

In 1920, recovered from her horrible accident, Bessie continued as the original prima donna of the white tops with her dove song. The Alice in Jungleland feature was totally rewritten and produced under Al G. Barnes' careful eye. Bessie as prima donna rode the lead elephant and was assisted in the cast by Martha Florine, Lottie Le Clair and the latter's husband, E. F. Messereau, all riding elephants. A ballet of forty girls interpreted the dance of the jungle. Charles Barry presented a troupe of educated ponies.

When the show returned to Portland that year, Al G. Barnes invited the nurses of the Good Samaritan Hospital to a circus performance as his guests in honor of Bessie Harvey. They had helped her the previous year in her convalescence from her tragic accident.

Initially listed as feature prima donna on Al G. Barnes again for 1921, Bessie with her husband actually appeared that season in the Howe's Great London program. She was in her familiar role. Charles Barry also filled a significant portion of the program: manege on the dancing horse, "Boston;" dancing ponies; liberty horses; equestrian novelty of dog and monkey riding bareback; elephant and pony; six trained pigs; four horses (with Ray Thompson).

Following that season Charles and Bessie never appeared on the same program. They simply drifted apart. In 1922 Charles was equestrian director of Gollmar Bros. and was one of four trainers at winter quar-

ters. During the season he worked a liberty act, a dog and monkey riding horseback and a camel act and directed the manege which included sixteen thoroughbreds.

The next season Charles Barry was equestrian director on John Robinson's Circus where he rode a high jumping horse in the fox hunt in addition to high school riding in which he was very accomplished. At the same time Bessie Harvey was on Sparks Circus, where as prima donna in the spec "Scenes from the Reign of King Tut," she sang to the accompaniment of the big show band.

In 1925 Bessie Harvey went to Sells-Floto as one of three prima donnas and was a lead character in the spec. Nothing more was recorded concerning her until June of 1928 when it was reported that Bessie Harvey Kruse, former circus rider, had suffered a stroke at her home in Miami, Florida where she was living alone. The showman J. M. Hathaway had learned of her plight and had her taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. There she laid helpless in bed and in a terrible financial condition. All possible help was solicited for her. On June 18, after several months of illness, she died at the hospital. Her interment was at Woodlawn Park Cemetery on June 19th. Her gravesite was donated by Mayme Kennedy, wife of Con T. Kennedy.

Meanwhile, Charles Barry became equestrian director of Heritage Bros. Circus in 1926. He had a pony act on that show. In the spring of 1927 he was one of a number of trainers at the Peru, Indiana quarters of Sells-Floto and Hagenbeck-Wallace. When the season opened he was made equestrian director of Hagenbeck-Wallace as well as horse trainer, rider and presenter of a liberty horse act. He had a novelty act, an equine wedding where four horses acted as bridesmaids. He composed and wrote the spec which he also directed.

During the winter, Barry continued at quarters where he again trained horses. Although in January it was announced that he would again be equestrian director of Hagenbeck-Wallace for 1928, by March he was over on Snell Bros.,



where he served as arena director, had charge of manege horses and was in the wild west.

In 1929 and 1930 Barry was equestrian director for Sparks Circus. Again he was in a variety of acts: novel animal act; trained pigs and greyhounds and collies, (with Jack Casteel). In November he and his new wife went to quarters in Montgomery, Alabama. The following season he was a horse trainer and again had liberty horses.

Only two other references to Charles Barry were found. Ringling-Barnum in 1933 issued a lithograph depicting Capt. Barry's educated equines and in 1952 he was listed as the equestrian director of Ben Davenport's Wallace Bros. Circus.

Fred Collier (1887-1926) and Rose Collier (1886-1981)

In 1903 Fred Collier and his pal, Johnny Griffin, ran away from their homes in Janesville, Wisconsin and caught a freight train headed west. At Omaha, Nebraska, leaving the train "by request," their spirits were raised when they encountered Otto Floto's Dog & Pony Show that was showing there. Fred applied to the management to take care of the ponies. He told Dave Markel, the equestrian director, that he could ride a pony. Of course the "green" rider, who had never actually ridden a pony, was immediately thrown by "Sparkle" to the jeers of his co-workers. However, by the close of the season Fred had picked up many of the "elementary tricks of a real cowboy."

From 1904 until 1909 Fred was on Cummins' Real Wild West. In 1904 Col. Fred Cummin's Indian Congress and Wild West was stationary, showing at the St. Louis World's Fair. It employed more than 350 Indians

Fred Collier and his large liberty horse act on Sells-Floto in 1923. Circus World Museum collection.

including Chief Geronimo. Collier received much experience in riding bucking horses and roping. Will Rogers was also on the show, working for \$15 per week just as did all the rest of the cowboys.

The show went on the road in 1905 and Fred was there until it closed in Atlanta, Georgia in 1909. Tom Mix was on the show in 1906, which was the second year that Fred served as arena director. In 1906 there was a company of U. S. soldiers under Fred Collier and Col. Bill Pickert. These troops paraded every day and gave thrilling performances of high hurdle jumping on horseback.

During the winter season of 1911-1912 Collier served as one of three ringmasters, on the Big Rhoda Royal 2 Ring Circus, Hippodrome and Old Buffalo Wild West, an indoor show. This association fostered with Rhoda Royal in 1912 was to continue in one form or another through 1922 except for 1917.

Fred "Cap" Collier was on Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Far East in 1910. He joined in Trenton, New Jersey, the winterquarters of the show, which opened that year in Madison Square Garden. Col. Cody always came into the arena during the rough riding. One day, while the Colonel was watching, Fred was thrown from a bucking bronco. He landed on a paper mache rock that camouflaged a moving picture machine used to illustrate a prairie fire.

As soon as "Cap" landed he gracefully doffed his hat to the audience who thought this was all part of the act. Buffalo Bill later complimented him for his presence of mind.

It was on the Buffalo Bill show that he came in contact with Rhoda Royal, the great Ringling horse trainer. In teaching Collier to break and handle horses, Royal was a severe master who was persistent with horse and rider alike. He seldom praised his students and never sympathized with them if they were thrown.

After working with Rhoda Royal, Collier went the next year with this famous trainer to the Rhoda Royal Show.

In 1913 and 1914 Collier was on Sells-Floto Circus. During the first of these two seasons, in Display #12 R-3, Flo Robinson, Fred Collier and Austin King rode Rhoda Royal's high school horses and in Display #18 R-3 Fred presented four liberty horses. In Tex McCloud's Wild West on the show, Fred was a champion trick and fancy roper. The following year he was one of seven riders on the track in Rhoda Royal's bunch. Also, along with Austin King, two four horse liberty acts were presented.

During an engagement of the Wortham Shows at Dickinson, North Dakota in November of 1915, Essie Fay on an Arabian and Fred on Rhoda Royal's high school horse, "President Wilson," led the Society Horse Show Parade.

On January 18, 1916 Fred Collier and Rose Dixon were married in St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Janesville, Wisconsin. On graduating from high school, Rose had become a school teacher with a salary of \$18 per month. Later she took over the bookkeeping department of Janesville Business College, a position she had at the time of her marriage. After their marriage, the Colliers went to Chicago where Fred, also known as "Cap", trained his horses at Rhoda Royal's ring barn at 18th and State Streets. At that time he was specializing in presenting statue horses and riding trick horses. Soon Mrs. Collier became interested in his work, despite her early aversion to horses when she was growing up on the family farm. She gradually took an active part in the act.

In 1916 the Colliers were on the Coop and Lent Circus, based at Cedar Rapids, Iowa with Art Eldridge, manager. The season opened at Rochelle, Illinois. Then

the route took the show through the Northeast to Ontario and Quebec, Canada, closing at Oak Park, Illinois on August 28th. Fred Collier was a jockey rider with Rhoda Royal's four horse act.

In the next year "Cap" presented liberty horses on the Jess Willard & Buffalo Bill Wild West which opened at Norfolk, Virginia on April 11, 1917. In mid season he was recovering from a broken arm received while performing in the show.

In March of 1918 Fred had a three horse bareback riding act on the Rhoda Royal Indoor Circus. By June of that year he was presenting Rhoda Royal's horses and elephant act on Coop & Lent. He also rode high school and in the concert did rope spinning.

For the next four seasons Fred and Rose were on the Rhoda Royal Circus. In 1919 the show opened at Valdosta, Georgia on March 6th and closed at Plant City, Florida on December 1. The Rhoda Royal's boat show then opened on December 22 at Titusville, Florida.

By 1921 Fred had become the equestrian director and program arranger. He still held this position on the show early in 1922, in addition to working eight trick horses, dogs, pony and bear act, a four horse riding act and appearing in the concert. Rose presented statue horses.

The Colliers left the show early in

the season, on April 7 at Troy Alabama, to join Gollmar Bros. at Montgomery, Alabama, opening there on April 15, 1922. They closed on November 4 and then returned to their home in Montgomery, Alabama.

Fred and Rose Collier's circus careers concluded with four seasons on Sells-Floto. Here in 1923 Fred presented his famous 12 white horse liberty act. He also was a trick roper in the wild west concert. Rose performed with her dogs and ponies. The winter of 1923-1924 was spent training animals at the Peru, Indiana quarters of Sells-Floto.

In 1924 Fred presented a variety of acts at the Chicago date as well as during the regular summer road season. In addition to his usual 12 horse liberty act, he had a bucking mule act, a pony drill and a multiple horse catch with the lasso. Rose rode manege and presented Spitz dogs and collies, did a pony drill including hind foot ponies and introduced posing horses. She featured all of these same acts again in 1925.

In 1926 two contracts were written with Sells-Floto. One involving both Fred and Rose specified that "Cap" would break and keep the manege horses in condition as well as the posing horses and would also work dogs and ponies. Rose was to ride manege and work dogs and ponies and the posing horses. Fred would also break and work the liberty horses and both were to be generally useful. For these duties they were to jointly receive \$60 per week.

A second contract with Fred Collier for \$30 per week stipulated that he was "to have full charge of the wild west concert and furnish five complete outfits; make the big five horse catch--in fact make himself generally useful in the wild west concert. In case the show had Indians, Mr. Collier to have full charge and look after same. Mr. Collier and cowboys to look after loading and unloading of the wild west stock."

Tragically, Fred was stricken ill on April 20 while Sells-Floto was playing in the Coliseum in Chicago and the following day he was taken to Janesville where he died of pneumonia on April 27, 1926 at the age

James and Alice Foster.



of 39. His funeral was conducted from St. Patrick's Church where he and Rose had been married just 10 years previously.

Although Rose had grown to love the circus, after Fred passed away she could not return to it because her heart was no longer in it. Returning to Janesville she became a bookkeeper at the Rock River Woolen Mills and later was clerk of the board of Frances Willard School. She died at the age of 94 on April 14, 1981.

James and Alice Foster

James Foster, cowboy trick rider and roper, was on Mabel Mack's Wild West with the Morris and Castle shows in 1925. Mabel Mack was his mother. Her circus featuring eight military mules had been a popular attraction on the Johnny Jones Exposition Shows in 1921. During the 1925 season she sold three head of her bucking horses to Jack Naler on the M. L. Clark & Son Circus.

James Foster and Alice were performers with Sparks Circus from 1927 through 1931. They appeared in both 1927 and 1928 in the seven member wild west as they did roping and trick riding and Alice also rode manege. In 1929 James did four horse catches with one rope while standing on his head. In August of that year while performing in the concert, James sustained shoulder injuries when his horse stumbled as he was attempting to past under its neck while it was in full motion. Alice, in her beautiful wild west costume of pale blue violet, continued her roping and trick riding. In addition in the big show she worked with elephants and rode manege as well as appeared in the aerial ballet.

In 1930 and 1931 Alice performed manege as well as worked in the wild west as a trick rider and roper. James in 1930 was also a wild west performer and in 1931 he was one of fourteen manege riders.

Foster was boss of the wild west on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1933 where he presented his cowboy acts from the fast fading West and Alice continued her trick riding and roping. Before rejoining Hagenbeck-Wallace for

1934 in their familiar roles, James and Alice visited Mabel Mack at Belle Glade, Florida.

When the Cole Bros. Circus opened in 1935 Foster was chief of the cowboys. He regularly did his famous five horse catch while standing on his head. That year there were 29 riders in the wild west. In the following years, 1936 through 1938 as well as 1946, Foster continued on Cole Bros. In most of these years he and Alice appeared at both the Chicago Stadium dates and on the regular season in both manege and wild west acts. He was also one of the horse trainers. In 1936 the liberty horse acts were presented by John Smith, Jack Joyce (center ring) and James Foster. For the next season Ken Maynard had the wild west concert. The Fosters were part of the group of more than eleven riders in the wild west. James also worked one of the three liberty acts. During the 1938 season the liberty horse offerings were expanded by Jorgen Christiansen's 24 Palomino display in the center ring, which was flanked by John Farthing and James Foster in the end rings. At certain stands, only Jorgen Christiansen appeared in the liberty horse offering. The Fosters were in the Mills Bros. concert in 1945.

Allan Hauser

The career of Allan Hauser as performer and animal trainer as well as equestrian director covered almost a quarter of a century. In 1913 on Al G. Barnes he was one of eight manege

LaVerne Hauser. Circus World Museum collection.



riders and also performed with bears and dogs. He continued on that show through 1921. In 1914 he presented seven Shetland ponies and rode a manege horse, "Odetta." In the following years he became one of the principal trainers and continued to perform. In the meanwhile he had a short lived marriage with Grace Davis of Seattle.

In February of 1920 Hauser married La Verne Venable at San Rafael, California. Previously, in this series of articles we had met La Verne as John Smith's bride in 1927. She was a noted performer in her own right with leopard, lion and polar bear acts and as a rider of waltzing and rearing as well as high and broad jumping horses. Even after her divorce from Hauser in 1925, she retained her name as La Verne Hauser.

In 1920 Allan Hauser rode a superb Arabian stallion, directed liberty ponies in Display 3 and liberty horses in Display 12. The remaining offerings in Display 12 were Ova Ashworth with 12 liberty horses in Ring 1 and Pearl Hamilton in the center ring with Barnes' famous Riding Four (a lion, a bear, a monkey and a dog riding individually on four white ponies) in the center ring. La Verne presented posing horses in Display 14 and three lions in the arena in Display 21. The following season one of Allan's duties was assistant to the menagerie boss, Cheerful Gardner.

The Hausers were on Sparks Circus in 1922 and through January of 1923. He was equestrian director and one of his specialty acts was with trained pigs. La Verne was one of five manege riders.

In 1923 Bessie Harvey was the prima donna on Sparks in the spec, "Scenes from the Reign of King Tut." Fairly early in that season the Hausers migrated to John Robinson's Circus where they also were in 1924. La Verne Hauser presented the leopards and returned to them again in 1925 when Harriett Guilfoyle left the show at Hannibal, Missouri after being severely clawed. Allan was involved with a number of equestrian displays: liberty horse group, pony dis-

play, dancing horses, fox hunting with high jumps and a high school horse.

Hauser was on Sparks in both 1925 and 1926. In January of 1925 he was at quarters in Macon Georgia working with Jack Casteel in training new wild and domestic animal acts. Allan trained and presented a group of llamas and zebras and showed some ludicrous baboons, dogs and ponies. After a rumor and denial in February that a divorce from La Verne was imminent, later it actually took place. In January of 1926 Hauser was back at quarters training stock. That year he was assistant performance director and presented football horses in addition to the dogs, baboons and ponies. When he left the show in August his acts were replaced by Walter Guice. Meanwhile, La Verne, his former wife, was on Sells-Floto where she was one of five manege riders, performing the "Cootie" on her mount, "John." She also performed with a pony revue and with collies, which rode on ponies. In late mid-season she absent from the show due to a throat operation performed at Superior, Wisconsin. That December she married John Smith.

La Verne continued on Sparks in 1927. In the equestrian department she made a number of presentations: broad and high jumping horse, six rotation liberty horses, side saddle equestrienne of wide fame on a thorough bred horse with fancy gaits. She was also one of fifteen girls on the swinging ladders and worked both a group of Indian leopards and a group of polar bears with great Danes. Over on Walter L. Main that season Allan Hauser presented liberty ponies and riding dogs. On July 10 at Lacona, New Hampshire he married aerialist Viola Cornalla. The ceremony was performed by the mayor of the town and the clown band played the wedding march. Viola Hauser's specialties were to become iron jaw and head balancing on the swinging trapeze.

Very early in 1928 Hauser was breaking another pony drill and was listed as equestrian director on Walter L. Main. However, by April 21 he was serving as equestrian director on Hagenbeck-Wallace and Viola was doing the iron jaw act. During that

season La Verne Hauser was presenting liberty horses and riding manege on SellsFloto. In mid-season, while performing, she broke one of her legs in two places.

For the next three seasons through 1931 La Verne appeared on Sparks Circus. In 1929 in addition to doing a specialty manege act and performing with lions, she was a character actor in the spec and presented a new pony act. In 1930 she did the famous full body layback on her rearing horse as well as manege and a dog act. She closed with the show in August at Samac Lake where she was replaced by a manege rider, Ruby Hoyt. In Sarasota, Florida on December 11, 1930, La Verne Hauser married Walter McClain, elephant trainer on Sparks Circus. She, along with Ruby Hoyt and Evelyn Thompson, was in the big elephant act in 1931. Riding manege she regularly did the layback on her horse as she circled the track. She also presented a leopard act.

Meanwhile, in 1929 and 1930 Allan Hauser and Viola were on Hagenbeck-Wallace where he served as equestrian director and in 1929 presented one of the two Arabian stallion acts. Bob Norton presented the other one while Austin King worked zebras in the center ring. Continuing on the show in 1930 Hauser worked one of three liberty horse acts and Viola Hauser for the third season was specially featured in her revolving spin head stand on the trapeze.

In 1931 Allan and Viola appeared on Sparks Circus. He was equestrian director and together with Carlos Carreon worked the liberty horses, was a manege rider and presented white collies riding on Welsh ponies. Also he and Carreon had riding dogs and monkeys and chariot racing dogs. Viola Hauser was one of the fourteen manege riders and again did the head balancing trapeze.

On the road program for Sells-Floto in 1932 Allan Hauser, Albert Schwarz and Gordon Orton presented liberty horses. Allan also was one of the thirty manege riders and performed a bucking mule act. Viola did her equilibristic head balance on the

trapeze and rode manege.

From 1933 through February of 1936 Hauser was with Downie Bros. Circus as equestrian director and performer. Although suffering from a broken wrist early in March of 1933, he was all set when the season opened. He presented performing pigs and also Shetland ponies. Viola rode a dancing horse in her manege. In 1934 Hauser's acts involved a high jumping horse, manege, eight dancing horses and a barnyard revue featuring the performing pigs. He was also a horse trainer on the show. From February through May, Viola presented iron jaw and trapeze acts on the Cleveland Grotto Circus. By then having drifted apart in their marriage, Allan and Viola Hauser were divorced on May 16, 1934.

The next season Allan Hauser, along with Carlos Carreon and Irvin Arnold, did a liberty horse act. He also performed all of the acts which he had presented the previous year and trained a new horse purchased by Charles Sparks, a valuable addition to the fourteen horse manege number. At the Macon, Georgia Shrine Circus held in November he was the director of the animals in the eighteen acts furnished by Downie Bros. Circus.

In 1935 Viola Hauser was on Hagenbeck-Wallace with her trapeze act. On September 21 of that year she married Harry Rooks at Rochester, Minnesota. They were soon to produce a new perch act. Rooks (1907-1976) was a trick and manege rider, presented liberty horses and ponies and did a perch act and head balance on the trapeze bar. Over the next two decades Viola was to do aerial work on a number of shows: Wallace Bros. (1937), Great American Circus (1939), Sparks Circus (1946), International Chicago Coliseum Circus (1947-1948), Detroit, Michigan Moslem Shrine Circus (1948), Mills Bros. Circus (1950), Cole Bros. Circus at the Chicago Stadium (1952), Clyde Bros. Circus (1955) and Kansas City, Missouri Ararat Shrine Circus (1955).

Early in 1936 Allan Hauser was working Downie Bros.' Kentucky bred horses at the Macon quarters.



In February he abruptly resigned his post as equestrian director and left the show. In September he was the coin machine operator on Dodson's World's Fair Shows. Earlier that year he had married Meda Wisenbacker at Tampa, Florida.

Walter McClain was on Al G. Barnes from 1932 until 1938, but his wife, Laverne Hauser McClain, was there with him only through 1936. During that time she was a versatile performer in a number of wild animal acts: leopards, tigers, elephants, a tiger riding on an elephant. Separating from McClain, she joined Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1937 to break horses at the Peru, Indiana quarters. She rode manege on that show in 1938. Walter McClain went to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1939. He continued there as superintendent of elephants until 1942 when he was tragically killed on November 25 when a heavily loaded wagon ran over him at the unloading runs in Jacksonville, Florida.

Leo and Ethel Hamilton

Although Leo Hamilton's half century of circus life as a performer and equestrian director is well established, relatively few details, including the beginning of his career, are documented. In an early 1922 *Billboard* it was announced that Hamilton was then planning his 14th year with Sells-Floto. Accordingly, this would have placed him on Sells-Floto as early as 1909, very near the 1906 opening season for that show. A *New York Clipper* article for 1913 indicated that Leo Hamilton was presently in Display 13 of Sells-Floto riding the high jumping horses, "Chief," "Luckett" and "Siroc." He was also one of the 10 manege riders on the track. Fellow riders included Marie Elser, Aldene Potter, Flo Fuller, Irene Montgomery and Maud Burbank. Further information established that he continued on Sells-Floto through at least the 1922 season.

In 1916 alternating with Don Darragh, Leo presented a group of five notorious U. S. Government hyneys which "proceeded to do as they pleased." These creatures were a cross between an African Grevy

zebra and a Rocky Mountain "Canary" or burro. As described by Courtney Ryley Cooper, they had a striped body with the viciousness of a jungle animal and the head and temperament of a Missouri mule. In Display 13 Rhoda Royal's high school and manege horses were ridden on the track by Mrs. Rhoda Royal, Viola Darragh, Alden Potter, Don Darragh, Leo Hamilton and Charles Barry. Leo also presented a troupe of black liberty horses and posing dogs. The following season he tried his hand at performing with wild animals.

In 1917 and 1918 he began to concentrate on the presentation of ponies and dogs including riding fox terriers and was well established on the show as an animal trainer. In 1918 Leo was also a manege rider. In the fall of 1918 he married Ethel Marine.

Her sister, Agnes Marine, was a member of the Ward-Kimball Troupe of aerialists. Ethel became an aerial performer on Sells-Floto in 1921.

In 1925 Leo and Ethel were on the Keith Albee circuit. At Easton, Pennsylvania they visited with Ethel's sister who was then performing with the Ward-Kimball Troupe on Hagenbeck-Wallace.

Leo Hamilton rode manege in the Great European Olympia Circus in Chicago in 1931 and was a rider in the Osman Shrine Circus in St. Paul in 1932. The next year he was the equestrian director of both the Los Angeles and the Denver Shrine circuses.

Leo and Ethel were on the Curtis-Gregg Circus in 1934. Leo was equestrian director, also presented dogs and ponies and rode manege paired with Dennie Curtis. This circus was almost the last one on which Leo appeared as a performer. Over the next 25 years he would serve as equestrian director on a number of indoor shows.

Those who remember the long

Harry J. McFarlan and his wife, Josephine.

tenure of the McFarlans on Cole Bros. Circus as equestrian director and wardrobe designer, respectively, may not be aware of their prior careers as animal trainers and performers. It is interesting to note that for the quarter of a century dating from 1923, even when he was an active performer, Harry was also equestrian director on almost every show with which he traveled.

Harry McFarlan, equestrian director on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1933.

Harry and Josephine were on Gentry Bros.-James Patterson Circus from 1923 to 1925 and on Floyd and Howard King's Gentry Bros. in 1926 and 1927. For the 1924 season Harry had a pony act and was the monkey

trainer. His wife rode a high school horse and worked in dog, pony and elephant acts. Harry was assisted in his equestrian director duties in 1925 by Robert Cottrell. In early January he was working pony acts in the ring barn at the Paola, Kansas quarters. Instead of the smaller six pony drills of 1924, there were two twelve pony acts which worked simultaneously in the end rings and then combined in the center ring for a concluding drill number. All of the ring stock ponies were under the care of McFarlan and trainer E. J. Webber. By the end of March all of the ponies had been clipped and looked to be in fine condition for going on the road. That season Josephine presented the big goat act, the ponies along with a Miss Cleo and rode a dancing horse.

In 1926 the Gentry Bros.-James Patterson Circus became Gentry Bros. Circus. Early in January Harry was breaking new stock for the show at the Louisville quarters, including a liberty horse act and two balloon ponies. During that season he presented bucking mules, riding colliers and trained ponies. His wife worked



a group of high leaping greyhounds and a troupe of goats. Also, she was a manege rider and appeared on the single trapeze.

Before the regular 1927 season, the McFarlans performed on the London Hippodrome Circus in the Memphis, Tennessee Auditorium. There, Harry had a pony drill. On the regular 1927 Gentry Bros. tour, he presented in the ring Shetland ponies with collie dog riders and riding dogs on the track, a troupe of military ponies and leaping greyhounds. Josephine had trained collies and rode manege on the horse, "Dan." She was also one of five riders on the dancing horses.

Harry McFarlan presented liberty horses on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1928 and on Sells-Floto in 1929. These were the two seasons for which he is not listed as an equestrian director. In April of 1929 at the Chicago Coliseum date, Josephine was badly injured with a broken leg when thrown from her high school mount. In recognition of such an unfortunate event, Josephine, along with Mildred Douglas and Irene Ledgett, helped to organize the

Harry McFarlan, equestrian director on Cole Bros. in 1943.



"Broken Boners" club. As late as August she was still recuperating from her injury but she was far from idle. Among other activities on the show, she was reading the lessons of Gracie Hanneford and Ernestine Clarke. In addition to one of five liberty horse groups, Harry had liberty ponies and riding dogs. Before her accident, was also scheduled with a riding dog act and a pony act.

Josephine McFarland in the late 1920s.

In 1930 Harry was again an equestrian director, this time on John Robinson's Circus and his wife had an animal act.

Beginning in 1931, the McFarlans were on Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus for the next four seasons and Harry was the equestrian director for this period. In 1931 Josephine presented leaping dogs on the front track and rode in the manege act. The following season the liberty horses were worked by Dewey Butler, Rudy Rudynoff and Harry McFarlan. His wife again had the leaping and high jumping greyhounds on the hippodrome track and she rode a high school horse. In February of that year Hagenbeck-Wallace acts appeared at the Detroit, Cleveland and Toledo Shrine and Grotto dates. These acts included Clyde Beatty's lions and tigers and fourteen manege horses under the direction of Harry McFarlan.

Beginning on the new Cole Bros. Circus in 1935, McFarlan was equestrian director until his retirement at the end of the 1948 season, except for 1938 when he had a similar position on Robbins Bros. Circus, the 2nd unit of Adkins and Terrell. At the same time, Josephine was wardrobe mistress and designer of costumes, including those used in the specs and in the manege acts. She served faithfully in this role until her retirement in 1948.

Some of Cole Bros.' animals appeared early at the Canton Shrine in January



of 1935 with Harry McFarlan in charge. At the Grotto Circus (Orrin Davenport) in Cleveland, Ohio, Harry presented one of the three groups of liberty horses. This Orrin Davenport unit also was billed for Columbus, Ohio for the week of March 4 as Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus.

At the beginning of the regular 1935 circus season, Harry McFarlan in his impressive white parade suit came on this newly framed railroad show as equestrian director. In 1937, in addition to the road tour and the Chicago Stadium date, the show also appeared at the New York Hippodrome. Early in 1937 during the St. Paul, Minnesota Shrine date, Harry was training Estelle Butler Clark and Mary Keen for a new equestrian act at the New York Hippodrome date.

In 1938 on Robbins Bros., McFarlan presented a liberty act and Josephine was wardrobe mistress and designer. On Cole Bros. in 1939, the liberty horse numbers were presented by Harry McFarlan, John Smith and Mike Doro.

Josephine McFarlan died on September 6, 1952 at Louisville, Kentucky after an illness of one year. Interment was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In retirement, Harry McFarlan maintained his residence at the Kentucky State Fairgrounds, the former Cole Bros. quarters, in Louisville, where he died in early 1956.

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In those days a showman looked like one, both the men and ladies. They dressed the part. The ladies dressed like ladies, none of those dirty Levis or overalls and dirty pants they wear today.

The chief of police would be cruising around and spot us as we headed for the lot. He would say, "Hi boys is Mr. Gordon with you this year?" We would inform him that he was. "Fine gentlemen," the chief would add. It was always payday for the chief when the Gentry show hit town.

A southern Deacon down yonder one fall on Gentry Bros. went against the joints in the side show, while Gordon Calvit was the adjuster and when he got his wings singed a wee bit, trying to find the right shell the pea was under, beefed to Gordon. After Calvit squared the beef, the Deacon said, "Brother, I hope to see you in heaven." "You will if you are there," replied Calvit. I believe Calvit out Barnumed Barnum with that crack.

When we got to West Virginia the Secretary to the Governor would join out for our stay there. He was a great friend of Calvit and all of us.

Needless to say the pastimes and amusements of the old West were in the side show. The grift would always operate while he was on the show, not that Gordon needed any help along that line, but it made the task easier.

Gordon Calvit married Naida Miller, one of the better wire walkers, and died over thirty years ago. Before that he was married to the daughter of Lillian Russell, the actress.

Shoo-fly and I don't mean pie.

Gordon Calvit was a great believer in peace and tranquility. So he invented Shoo-fly. He had a friend in the wholesale drug business in Louisville, Kentucky, who made up a concoction Gordon call Shoo-fly. It was a harmless drug that worked like a Mickey Finn, but it was a sure-fire way of taking care of the coattail pullers, Mr. Pokey Nose, troublemakers and knockers.

He would enlist the law in towns that had been taken care of. One powder in a bottle of Coke was all that was needed and Mr. Coattail Puller either headed for the nearest doniker or if in the weeds were real handy, it was for the tall and uncut he headed, and everything would be serene again. I remember one of the industrial towns in Ohio where the chief and the High Sheriff were feuding. So the chief gave the sheriff a shot of Shoo-fly. In a town in Kentucky we had trouble with a J.P. and the High Sheriff insisted on doing the honors himself. As he had

Gordon Calvit, fixer on Gentry Bros. Circus. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



been taken care of and didn't like the J. P. I still can see that J. P. hi-tailing down the dusty road, holding his hand on his posterior. The modus operandi was for the law or someone connected with the stores to bring Mr. Coattail Puller over to the Coke stand and say, "just to show we aren't such a bad fellows, I'll buy you a Coke." And then the fun began. Calvit knew human nature. He used to tell about when he went into a man's office in the morning of show day to do a little mending for his show. He said, "I do nearly all the talking, that way you know if the man is only lukewarm, which I find he rarely is, you avoid the man asking embarrassing questions."

Taking care of the reader.

A town in Arkansas like a lot of other towns around the country had a very high reader for the big show. But the license for the concert or after show was only \$10. So here was a problem for Gordon Calvit, the patch for the Gentry show to overcome. Which he did with his usual aplomb. Gordon had of course taken care of the High Sheriff to operate the joints and he explained to the sheriff that the license was prohibitive. Calvit went to the town clerk's office and bought and paid \$10 for a reader to give a concert.

The show then charged the big show admission for the concert, which we gave first and then made an announcement that any one could see the big show for free.

Gordon went to his reward on November 20, 1928 in Quincy, Florida while on tour with Gentry Bros. Circus.

The Missing Big Top

Here is a rumor that did not start on the spud pile.

One Sunday in 1954 I stopped in Portsmouth, Ohio to visit King Bros. Circus. As I came on the lot they had a real mystery on their hands. They

could not find the big top.

The truck and driver with the big top had not arrived in town.

I was in Red Larkin's Pie Car when I heard of it and said as a joke to Red that the driver was taking the top to Mexico to peddle it. A little later I went out on the midway and there were rumors about where the truck was and among was them my joke about it being taken to Mexico.

They did not locate it for several days and then found the truck abandoned in Dayton, Ohio. The driver had just taken it on the Arthur Duffy.

The first year playing buildings in 1957 with Ringling-Barnum we jumped from Toronto to Denver and one of the trucks failed to arrive in Denver. It wasn't located until a day or two later when it was found abandoned in the railroad yards in East St. Louis, Illinois. Maybe the truck got lonesome for the train. Well that driver took it on the Arthur Duffy also and just went home to some place in New Jersey.

Then there was the time in 1951 when one of the horse trainers bought a horse at a bargain in Tulsa, Oklahoma while showing there with "Big Bertha." One of "The Deacon's" drivers had quit that day and as he approached the trainer about driving the van to Sarasota winter quarters, so he was hired and given \$100 for expenses.

A week or two went by and when the van did not arrive in Sarasota the trainer contacted the police department in Tulsa who found the van a block from where we showed in Tulsa.

Bannermen are such quaint characters.

Fred Coleman was the advertising bannerman on Walter L. Main. Fred sold a banner to a soda water man in Michigan. When the man came that night to check up he said to me, "You fellows didn't do right by me." I asked what was the trouble my good man. He informed me that Mr. Coleman had promised him that when our three herds of elephants (we had three elephants, one to a herd) would perform in the rings our announcer would say Walter L. Main's elephants

were drinking a bottle of so and so pop and that each elephant would be holding a bottle of soda water in his trunk. The moral of this should be "don't believe everything everyone tells you, especially a circus bannerman."

A fellow by the name of Cruise had a Jam Pitch on Christy Bros. Circus. He would be fixed to work on one of the main corners in town and also worked the blow-off on the lot.

He would time his pitch downtown so that when he had his customers all loaded up with knick knacks and Larry watches, he would finish just as the parade made the main stem near where he was working. When the people heard the calliope Cruise's tip would break up and he would fold his joint and duck. By good timing he sure got away with very few beefs.



Buck Jones and his 1927 Packard sportscar.

Another incident about the ill-fated 1929-Buck Jones Wild West Show. After leaving San Francisco we had so many plasters (attachments) on the show that we jumped ahead of our paper. We moved from Oakland to Reno, Nevada to get out of California to try and escape the plasters by passing Sacramento.

The next morning in Reno we were on the lot standing around cutting up Jackies with Buck Jones. Jones had one of those fancy Hollywood cars, a Packard with all the Hollywood trimmings and accessories.

While we were talking the High Sheriff of Reno drove up and came over to Buck and said, "You Buck Jones." "Yes," Buck answered. The Sheriff said, "Mr. Jones I got an attachment for your auto, want me to

read it?" "No," he said. "Here are the keys, you may take it as it looks like they are going to take everything else." Buck died in that terrible Coconut Grove nightclub fire in Boston in 1942.

During prohibition the boot-leggers would come around the Gentry show to peddle a little snoot-boot. The hands would buy some and tell the leggers we get paid tonight down at the show train. Bring us several gallons there and we will buy them. When the leggers showed at the train that night the hands would stick them up, clean them of their B.R. and the whiskey. But many was the time the leggers would only have tea in the jugs.

I was on a show where we had a couple of jig riggers who would go under the blues while the show was going on. They would spot a man sitting there who had a big poke in his ass britch. They would cut it out with a razor blade. This caused a little heat at times.

Floyd King was having a Coke in the outside stand on the Main show, of which he was the owner. Johnny McNulty was making a sale of Cracker Jacks. The customer gave Mac a dollar. Floyd said to Mac, "Give the gentleman three for a quarter." Mac took the dollar bill rang it up, and turned to Floyd and said, "Three for a quarter hell 3 for a dollar, that's salesmanship." The funny thing was the customer walked away and never beefed.

Kitty Kat in the Hills of Kentucky.

About the best territory for a ten-car grift show some years ago in the spring would be the hills of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania. One town I remember, Wayland, Kentucky, was a mining town with not much more than a company store and one wondered where the business would come from. But about parade time the town would be loaded with people. It was the last place I saw a railroad run excursions on circus day, in Wayland. Then there was Jackson, Kentucky

where you only gave a matinee on account of too much cat at night. But what a day everyone would have, and everything worked. Then there wee towns like Louisa, Pikeville, Olive Hill, Harland, Hazard and Lynch. Corbin was another town where there would be plenty of cat. In Paintsville and Beartville the hill bilies had plenty of cat in them, but they spent their money.

I had a kid about twelve years old working for me in one town and the kid had a big German Luger roscoe in his kick. You were really trouping when you made the hills of Kentucky. Then in the fall we would get six or seven weeks in Mississippi and make about every small town in the state to very big business. And of course plenty of cat, but that only separated the men from the boys. It kept a man young, those were the day a boss-canvas man and everyone else had to have muscles and know how to use them to back up their big top vocabulary.

You know the easiest way to burn up a small town editor was to give a matinee only in his burg and then announce it was only a feed and water stop.

Remember when having opposition one show would always use this—in fact more of everything than all the “Graduated Bicycle Shows,” put together. And here is another, “Ministers attend everywhere and pronounce it instructive.”

Did you ever hear a side show talker (not barker) make an opening and in extolling the virtues of his attractions mention the Zingerpipers. If you did, you would know you were listening to a member of the old school of orators. What is a Zingerpiper? That is one of the mysteries of the circus that has never been solved. If you knew who were meant by the following you must have been a pretty hip gee. The mender, the patch, the man, the fix, the fixer, the business manager—none other than the legal adjuster.

Around the old time grift shows the owner was never called by his right name. He was always Colonel Johnson, the assistant to the owner.

Another thing around those shows, patrons willing to be

taken were always accommodated and the ladies were always treated with utmost courtesy.

One season down in Oklahoma and Texas with Lee Bros. Circus we had rain for weeks, which reminds me of the story of the farmer who prayed for rain and got such a fulsome response, that addressing the Almighty again, said, “I prayed for rain O Lord, but this is ridiculous.”

Bull and More Bull

One year with Ringling-Barnum, Bill Reynolds, the chief of police, was having a little trouble getting the permit to move the elephants from the Mott Haven yards to Madison Square Garden. The police, on account of the heavy traffic, wanted the show to wait until Sunday to move them. As the show got in on Monday, Hugo Schmitt, the boss bull man, did not want to wait that long and was getting rather fidgity keeping his charges in the cars all the time.

On a Wednesday morning I was sitting in Chief Reynolds’ office in the Garden. All of a sudden I saw the bulls come thundering by. I said, “Chiefie, look.” Well Herr Schmitt just took the bull by his own horns (only elephants don’t have horns) and marched his charges down to the Garden without a permit and he did

Hugo Schmitt and some of his friends.



it at the height of the morning traffic and they never even got a beef from the police department. Of course Chiefie’s face was a little red.

How to get to Portland, Oregon on four bucks.

In 1947 after “Big Bertha” closed and we were in quarters in Sarasota I had charge of tickets at the main entrance.

After the hands got paid off and got their bonuses, Johnny Bowe’s emporium across the street from the main entrance would really be jumping for a few days.

One of the hands I noticed was never joining in the hilarity and I asked Ray Maxwell, my assistant, who the guy was. He said, “they call him Scotty, he had been a porter on the show and knew that the show had closed and they did not need him.” He was also broke and did not drink. So big hearted Red said, “Here go over and give this character this \$4.00,” which Maxwell did. Scotty came over and thanked me.

I never did see him again and asked Maxwell what had become of our friend Scotty? When you gave him that money he left for his home in Portland, Oregon. Well I don’t believe \$4 will pay your way from Sarasota, Florida to Portland, Oregon, but it at least Scotty a start. All he needed was a little start.

You know when a farm couple gets married their parents usually give them a house and a section of land. Truck show people are usually given the address of the house trailer finance company and the country at large. But with Scotty it was four bucks and a start to Portland.

Trans-continental Gibby, a circus ticket seller, told me that while making a jump from the west coast to the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1933, he lost a very valuable book containing the names and addresses of over 100 hashers and the names of horses that should have won.

In Eastern Canada with the Gentry show the cookhouse wagon was sunk deep in the mud. They had two bulls, twenty horses and a bunch of candy butchers with a hook rope to

keep it from tipping over. An Englishman watching said, "My word two elephants, twenty horses and thirty hoboes on one cart."

In Hot Springs, Arkansas, one winter a number of us from various circuses were taking the baths. We would eat in a nice little restaurant run by a Greek. One night Doc Hall from "Big Bertha" said, "You know why I like eating here it tastes like a circus cookhouse." The Greek heard Doc and said, "What you know about cookhouse?" We told him we were circus people and the Greek said, "I run cookhouse on J. D. Barkoot carnival in the summer."

An Ode to Frank Braden

"When tenting days are done and nevermore he smells the sawdust, and sees the laughing eyes, I somehow think that on a dais'ed floor he'll turn a somersault in Paradise—to give some angel child a glad surprise who never saw a circus before."

Sam B. Dill, circus manager and owner.

No one has so much idle time on his hands as the lover of the circus who drops around a big top to have a idle chat with the workingmen who are trying to get the big top in the air for a 4 o'clock matinee.

My uncle Eph is a Gee who still thinks it's worthwhile to stop and count his change.

Babe Boudinot, former car manager and general agent on the big one, one time said to me, "Who ever said that opposition billing wars have their victories should be compelled to name them."

Trouping During the Great Depression.

Sam B. Dill, who had been manager of the John Robinson Circus, brought out a truck show in 1930. It was called the Sam B. Dill G.M.C. Circus. He had promoted General Motors for some trucks that was the

reason for the G.M.C on the title.

The great depression was just getting a fair start, so things were not good around the country. Whitey Murray was working novelties on the show and as things were a little rough, he would get a room and four or five other butchers would heel in every night, some copping the Brussels.

At one town in Ohio, when Whitey and the boys came down in the morning, the owner of the Flea Bag met each one with a "Good Morning, did you sleep well?" Then he collected a deuce from each of them.

This show had quite a few different titles, among them Gentry Bros., Famous Robbins and finally the Tom Mix Circus.

Another Dill show touch. The show was coming into Dallas to winter. The trucks were stopped somewhere, when one of the hands who joined out when it opened in West Baden, Indiana, said to Dill, "Mr. Dill I have not had a payday in a long time, I would like to get a little money." Sam reached in his kick and gave him three big silver half dollars. Of course the fellow only asked for a little money, so Sam must of have taken him at his word. At that it wasn't quite as bad as being paid off in the dark. But then that hand's biggest worry was not how much salary he earned, but how much he got.

And then Sam may have had the thought of that old Chinese proverb, "That paying a show hands amounts to the admission that the circus biz is no longer a game to see the country."

Paydays Aren't Everything

And no doubt Sam added, "Don't forget you et in my cookhouse." Of course paydays weren't everything, but they sure helped. Low salaries weren't bad as circuses always gave you a sporting chance to save yourself if you knew the score.

Ray Daly was the side show manager on Howes Great London Circus. His wife LaCeil was the mitt reader (mind reader and fortune teller) with

the show. One payday Ray got drunk and blew his B. R. When Ray got sober his wife was on the warpath, as a wife will at times. She said, "Raymond, what did you do with your money?" Answered Ray, "You tell me you're the Mitt Reader."

John Ringling made one of the most dramatic statements I have ever heard, at the death of his last brother Charles. In 1926 as he stood looking at his brother, with a tear in his eye, he said, "I am the last man on the lot."

During the war in 1942 we were playing Washington D.C. with Ringling. I was in the menagerie waiting for the front door Super to holler doors. It was a little early for doors, when Bev Kelly, the press agent, came in the menagerie. He had with him Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to America and General of the Army George Marshall as well as a lot of other V.I.P.s. I was sitting on a bale of hay, just waiting for the doors to open. Bev was showing them Gargantua and everything else. When they came up to where I was sitting, General Marshall said, "Do you mind if I join you. I am tired." I said, it would be a pleasure, and he sat down and said, "I will join you later," to the others. We had quite a talk. He was just as common as an old shoe.

You know when a circus manager asks his people to stop thinking of themselves they start thinking what will happen next.

What old timers mean about the trials of early day trouping, being red-lighted was being paid off in the dark, under a bridge, and then later on we brag those were the day.

Famous last words, "We will remain on the road as long as the money comes in."

The Walter L. Main Circus played Matoaka, a small town in the hills of West Virginia. There wasn't a lot in town big enough to put up the big top. So we put up the menagerie and the side show tops.

A small connection went from the menagerie and the side show. We had to pull the wagons up a small creek to get to the lot and exit.

Some of the big show acts also worked in the side show. Arthur Hoffman, the side show manager, kept grinding them in all day and



night. All the joints worked and I had five men cutting cake all day in the outside stand. And it wasn't Angel food.

That was one town that the contracting agent must have booked by remote control. I believe that this was the only town that ever had a continuous circus performance. We charged 50 cents for the show, which was big money in those days.

We were playing Pennsylvania and the state troupers sloughed all the joints. The town laws were OK, but no fixing could square the troupers.

We finally left Pennsylvania and went into New York and New England. And then back to Pennsylvania for a few towns. The last one being Greensburg before heading for Ohio.

As the fixer got word that there were no state troupers in town, he told the Lucky Boys to go to work. Just before the big show started four or five men came on the lot. With *Billboards* in their kicks, they walked in back of the side show. No one paid much attention to them, but Johnny McNulty, one of the connection men said to me, "It looks like a carnie is in town account of these men having *Billboards* in their pockets." They didn't look like carnies to me and sure enough they weren't, as a minute or two later they came out of the kid show and had all of joint men snatched.

They were state troupers in plain clothes and the *Billboards* were only a little window dressing. The moral of this might be to look before you leap.

You know or did you that the late great press agent Frank Braden did not like to be called a "Tub-Thumper." He said only a first of May called him that. But then Frank may have thought he might have to join the musicians union if they called him that.

On a slow bus to the minors.

A few weeks before the strike in Scranton in 1938 on "Big Bertha" John Ringling North called for Frank Braden and asked him to join the Al G. Barnes Circus for a few days on a special assignment. J. R. N. told Frank to go by plane and join the show that was somewhere in the west. Braden said, "Johnny, you are



Frank Braden, master circus press agent.

sending me from the majors to the minor leagues, if only for a few days, don't you think I should go by bus?"

While trouping our Star Green Amusement and Circus through the canebrakes of Louisiana, most of the towns we played were so small that the phone books didn't even have one yellow page.

Harold Alzana, the great high wire artiste, on his first season with Ringling after the war said of Sarasota, Florida, "When the show closed we searched high and low for a place to live and found it high."

Mrs. Henry Kern was the only lady who I ever knew on a railroad show who played in the band. Her husband Henry was the bandleader on the Gentry show.

Frederic "Babe" Boudinot, Ringling-Barnum general agent.

Did you know that an elephant's hide is about an inch thick, but a pinprick will draw blood.

Babe Boudinot, the general agent, had a little trouble with an official in a certain town in getting the OK to show. But when the official said he would give the OK if he was weeded \$200 under the table, which Babe agreed to do. The official said

no checks, only cash. Babe went to the bank and got ten new twenty-dollar bills, which he weeded to the official. Next door to the official's office was the tax office, where Babe went to pay for the license. As Babe stepped up to the wicket to pay for the reader, in the next wicket was the official paying his taxes with the ten new twenties Babe had weeded him.

Synopsis-A very important word around a circus.

No matter how otherwise illiterate a circus owner, manager, 24-hour man, press agent or other factotum around a circus may have been, they all knew the meaning of the word synopsis, that all-important document the advance people sent back to the show. It was a daily ritual for the manager and other interested parties to look at the report to see what it said about the next day's town. The 24 hour man's synopsis would tell about the arrangements made for the show on show day, such as the feed for both man and beast, and for water. It advised that the lot was in good condition, if not he had it done. The agent would call on the railroad officials about the handling of the train, to see that there was a proper crossing. If not have one built and a hundred and one other things that had to be done. As the old saying, the looniest man in the world is the 24 hour man in a dark railroad yard



waiting for a train whistle and then about dawn the Flying Squadron would arrive. He would then be one of the busiest men on the lot, until about the time the big show was ready to start. Then if it rained he would have to hustle and get straw and sawdust to make the lot fit to roam he may take his first deep breath and start thinking of the next town he had to make and the last thing he would get out

of the red wagon would be the synopsis that the general agent and contracting agent had left for him for his next town.

Here is what Webster, has to say

about synopsis, a general view, as of a treatise-condensed statement, often with headings and sub-headings. Further Webster said it is a systematic exposition or argument in writing, a methodical discussion of the facts and principles, involvement in writing of the facts, principles and conclusions reached. Mr. Webster you sure said a mouthful as that is just about covers a 24-hour man.

Things you don't see or hear anymore around a circus.

"Now if all the men will kindly step down this way and the ladies and children over here they will be entertained by that Old Time favorite the London Punch and Judy.

"Pardon me sir, I am the treasurer of the show, as you no doubt know we got in late today and we didn't have time to get to the bank, so I have all this silver on my hands. If you would kindly accommodate me with some paper money I won't charge you for your reserved seats.

The circus must always keep abreast of the current events, When the Tea Pot Dome scandal broke in 1923, the Ringling-Barnum had this to say about Barnum's Zip-What Is It. "Zip the man with the original Tea Pot Dome."

Going down Broadway one day a lush put the ding on me. I noticed he had a bottle of Sweet Lucy in his kick. So I said, "What are you doing with that bottle in your kick?" I asked. Mr. Lushwell said "Oh that is for emergencies in case I get bit by a rattle snake while walking down the avenue."

Sounds around a circus.

Do I have to pay for lil chile (he's only about fourteen). You all got and dancing girls this tar. Where do I go, straight ahead? Ten cents for dat lil bag of goobers. What time is the parade? Where did you come from?" Heard in the side show, stick and stay until you hit red then quit. Turn over Eiffel-boss canvas man in the rain and mud. These are the days that separate the men from the boys. Hold your horses the elephants are coming. Children of all ages—you will be entertained by this dainty little Miss Parzaza, who will shake her belly like a bowl full of jelly on a frosty morn. She will also do the

Razz Ma Tazz, the Giddy Glide and that old time favorite the Oriental Hootchie. Get your peanuts to feed the elephants. Hurry a bit. There are five gentlemanly ticket agents. This ladies and gentlemen is the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Side Show. The World's Greatest and Best on God's Green Earth. Ice cold lemonade, all you can drink five cents. Are there any wrestlers in the crowd. Doors, doors. And now in the center ring; why not go first class. I sell the best seats. A special announcement concerning our concert or after show. If all you ladies and gentlemen would kindly come over here in front of the annex or side show I will give you a program for today. Follow the man with the meat. Don't fail to see the Gazibgerpipers. See the hold-up of the stagecoach, the burning of the covered wagon and the hanging of the horse thief. All the ladies and children over here where you will be entertained by the Old Time London Punch and Judy. All the men over this way is where you see the dancing girls. Step right up folks. Now if you will kindly give me your undivided attention. Programs a quarter. I sell the concert tickets.

You will have plenty of time to see a full and complete performance in the side show long before the performance starts in the big tent You can see it all in 30 minutes, or stay as

The Judge, Herbert Duval.



long as you like. Hey you punks get a away from those cats, you wanta get your arm bitten off. Hamburger, hamburger pickle in the middle and the onion on top, cooking in the bacon, all the time help yourself to the mustard.

Possum, the bunkhouse philosopher was taking his annual swim in the gulf at Lido Beach in Sarasota. A lady tourist in the water near him hollered, "Are you sure there are no alligators around here?" "No mam," answered Possum, "the sharks scare them away."

Fred Buchanan hired a clown who wasn't much as a laugh provoker; in fact he was real minor league. But said Fred, "He tells many a funny story, so I'll have him double around the stake and chain wagon and let him tell his funny stories. That way he will keep the grifters happy."

I received a letter from a C.F.A friend on his visit to the Christy show. I mentioned this to the fixer of the show I was with and he asked about biz on the show. When I informed the patch that the C.F.A. said that biz was big, he reacted saying, "That is only a chump's opinion."

Ollie Polk, an old time grifter around many a show, came from a little rut in the road in Mississippi. Whenever anyone asked Ollie what kind of town he came from he would answer, "Soso" and that was the name of the town, Soso, Mississippi.

I believe a circus man's greatest asset is his ignorance, as he never knew what he couldn't do.

Judge Duval, the gentleman from Little Rock, Arkansas.

Another one of the all time greats in the circus fixing department was "The Judge" Herb Duval, who wound up his illustrious career with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, where he spent about twenty years as legal adjuster. The Judge was a mixer besides being a fixer. He knew the President of the U. S. A. down to the most common worker on Big Bertha. He knew every nickname on the show. The Judge was a graduate of the grift shows.

One of the Rootin' Tootin' shows he was on called the J. H. Eschmen Circus, a ten car turkey out of St. Paul, Minnesota, It was really loaded with talent in the grift department.

He was with Bert Bowers and Jerry Mugivan's Howe's Great London Circus, and that show was loaded with talent.

The Judge would have made a hell of a diplomat, as he knew human nature, its failings and its strengths. There is an old saying around a circus, that he has more con than a Christmas turkey. Well the Judge was endowed with the right amount of it.

For a while in 1947 I was the Judge's assistant on the Big One among a few other jobs I had. We had many a laugh together. The Judge being a great storyteller, used to say to me, "Red, a smart operator always operates with O. P. M. (other people's money). So this winter you and I will see if we can find some of it."

The Judge took a postgraduate course with Russell Bros. Circus, his first Sunday school show, before going to the greater glories with Big Bertha.

He handled the show's entire end of the claims arising from the Hartford fire.

When the Judge got in the big limousine class with a chauffeur driven Caddy, he still came around to "Heartbreak Acres" in Sarasota three or four nights a week to cut it up with the boys.

Judge Duval went to his reward in 1954.

Circus people had a language all their own.

The Buck show or the Yank show, the Big show, Big Bertha, the Main show, the Two Bill's show, the John show or John Hogg show, the Honest Bill or Lucky Bill shows, the Sunday School shows and the wagon shows.

When circus men discussed various circuses it never was Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey it was always the Ringling show. Never Sells-Floto Circus, it was always the Floto show. Christy Bros, Circus was the Christy show and so on.

If you were in the know, one would know at once who these men were. The Turk, Bert and Ed owned the American Circus Corporation shows. Zack, Jess, Danny, Sam and H. B. and

Buster were managers of the Corporation circuses. George Washington had a circus. Also Uncle John had a lot of them. He and his brothers were sometimes known as the Mustache Brothers. Of course you all know who P. T. was. Jungle Jim was one of the best wild animal trainers and he also owned his own circus.

Now let's head for the cookhouse as the flag is up and it's a Dukie Run. Hey Shorty what do they have in there for lunch. "Gut and Tightened," What kind of soup, "More Power." What do they have for breakfast, "Ups and Overs" and "Stacks of Wheat." And for dinner, "Ham Hocks and Bumble Bees." Hey Blackie pass the dummy, want some sand. Today's Friday, "Fish and Mulligan." What do they save for toppings? What's the latest from the spud pile.

Don't forget your Dukies.

Opening Day, Choosing day. The closing day in the Big Apple. I'll see you in the Garden.

And now we come to the candy stands Ice House, so let's put a little spice in the cake. Boss-Butcher to the first of May who has just joined out: "OK I'll give you a bang of it, but it ain't all milk and honey. You know you have to do a little Chinese around this trash-pile. No stub pulling though. I'll put you on dry on the come in, and then on the wet. If I think you can cut it I'll let you work rubber on the blow-off. In the morning when the wagon gets on the lot.

George Blood's Ringling-Barnum cookhouse in 1955.



"Soon as we unload you start sacking goobers. Another thing you will have to promote some gunsels every day to help pick up the empties. And tonight you don't drop them, and stay away from the bally broads in the backyard. When you go to the train tonight see Doc Hall, he'll give you a place to flop in the butcher's car.

"Hey Cocky give this gunsel a white coat and don't be smarting him up the first day how to turn his dukie and to do a lot of hyping. You know this is a Sunday school show now".

Hey boss. How about me running the Hop Scotch board in the kid show or one of the blow-off? No you spend too much time cutting cake and turning your duke. That's what the show has Doc Garland in the annex for.

How did Maxie do with the cement mixer yesterday?

Vic Pratt had a big day with his Wind Pudding joint.

Weeping Willie joined out today—empty as a Hoot Owl.

You don't have to be an old timer to remember the most famous address in the outdoor show world—25 Opera Place, Cincinnati, Ohio, the address of the old *Billboard* where circus people could always get their mail.

The first time we played Plainville, Connecticut with Ringling was in 1948. Plainville is only a small village, but business was tremendous. We had two turn-aways, but we got a bad railroad, so we had a late arrival. The lot was jammed with people. Everyone was a little tense and on edge as one usually was on a late day and everything was hustle bustle. On late days we would work the midway. As I came on the midway a little man

gave me a small pamphlet and said, "Cheer up, things are not so bad, it looks like you are going to do OK today, read this." Here is what it said, "They were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient. Because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still. They kept silent when they wanted to talk. They were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable." That was all. It was simple and always will be.

Well that surely gave me a lift. Don't you think that is

what makes saints saints? I slept in the boss's car and I stuck one up in the car

I remember "The Deacon" Dave Blanchfield and George Werner, two hardy old souls of the old school, reading it and then saying that is all right. I thought that fit in very appropriately on a late arrival day around a circus.

Windy Van Hooten and the ferocious lions.

Did you every hear the story of the bouncing lions on the Windy Van Hooten Circus. Well Windy had a bouncing lion which was a favorite and star attraction on the show. But Windy ran into tough luck and the lion died, so Windy had the hide tanned and cured. The next day a tramp came on the lot and asked for a job. So Windy hired him on the spot and said, "I got just the job for you." The next day Windy explained what the job was. All the tramp had to do was get into the old lion skin and prance around like a live lion. They rehearsed and everything went well, so Windy said, "No one will know the difference."

But when the show was given the tramp was surprised to find that there was another occupant in the cage. The tramp almost died of terror, but he took good care to keep far away from the other lion as possible. But the cage was small and the two soon collided. But instead of calamity the tramp heard a small voice from the other lion, "Don't be nervous, I am an old show bum myself."

The mouths of hard working and hungry show hands on "Big Bertha" would go flippity-flop, and of course the actors' mouths would do the same when the word came out at George Blood's Hotel de Ringling was serving prime rib today.

The largest city that never had Ringling-Barnum while the show was under canvas was Oakland, California. Since going into buildings it has it every year.

The smallest towns the Big Show made under canvas were Niantic, Connecticut (they billed New London) population 1,900 playing it on June 18, 1946. And Mt. Shasta, California, population 1909 on September 1, 1929, for matinee only.

The smallest cities played since

going into buildings was Canfield, Ohio, where the show played for the fair August 21-23, 1957. Concordia, Kansas, population 7150, had the record for the biggest attendance for years when they played to over 25,000 people on September 13, 1924.

A lion pays a visit to the lobby of Madison Square Garden.

I was sitting with Ed and Betty Kelly in the Garden during a dress rehearsal of Ringling-Barnum. Ed was the vice president of the show and Mrs. Charles Ringling's representative. We were sitting right in front of the wild animal arena when Betty said I am getting out of here, those lions are acting real bad. Just about a minute later I said, "Look Ed" and there was a lion right in front of us. Well we sure took it on the Arthur Duffy to higher seats. The lion jumped over the railing and into the lobby of the Garden. It then headed towards the telephone booths where Art Concello was waiting for an empty booth. When he looked up and saw the lion he opened the door and said to the fellow using the phone move over there is a lion outside. The fellow was a newsman

from the New York *Daily News* and he was calling his office. Well he gave his paper a first hand report of a lion loose in the Garden.

A few days later at a regular performance five elephants ran and got away from their handlers and came charging through the lobby. They missed me by a couple of feet and headed for the 50th Street exit.

They hit the doors and ran out on 50th Street running against the traffic down to 9th Avenue and turned again at 49th and kept going again against the traffic. They were stopped in front of Murphy's gin mill at 49th and 8th Avenue. While the bull hands were hooking them they dropped a lot of cannon balls on the side walk in front of Murphy's.

Edward F. Kelly, Ringling-Barnum vice president.

Later on when I left the Garden and the bulls had been returned to the Garden basement, those big piles of elephant cannon balls were still on the walk. As I came up a fellow said to me, "What is that, where did it come from." He had not seen the bulls. In all that traffic and running against it, as the streets were one way, not a bull was hit by a car. It was truly a miracle on 8th Avenue.



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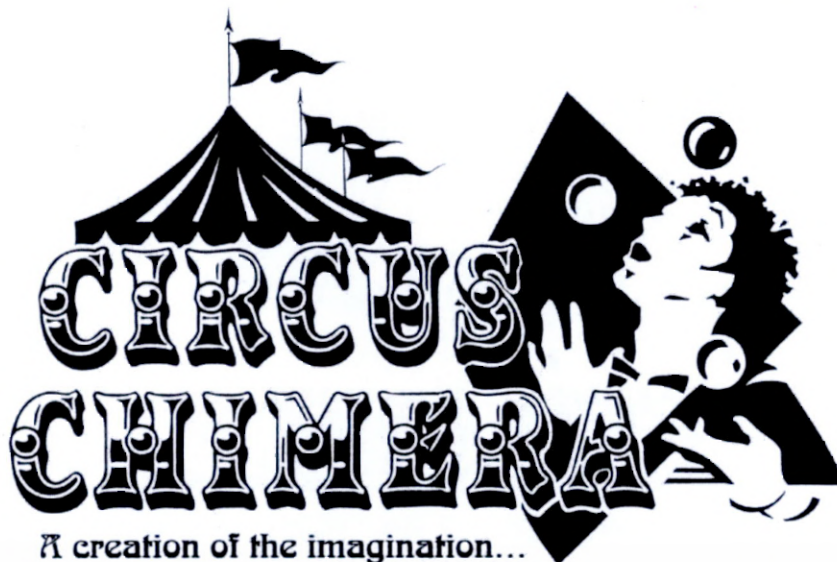
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CIRCUS REPORT

JAN & BILL BIGGERSTAFF



Bill Woodcock's Circus Album

This summer as something of a lark, CHS member William H. Woodcock, Jr. began to send friends emails of photographs from his extensive collection of elephant and circus images. He quickly started adding commentary to the pictures. Soon, the annotations lengthened as did the list of recipients as his snippets of circuses past meandered through cyberspace. The Bandwagon editors were among those receiving these fascinating excursions into circus history. Knowing a good thing when they saw it, they asked Woodcock for permission to publish his musings. He graciously agreed.

We hope and expect this will become an ongoing feature that will run for years, much like the articles by David Watt and Orrin King. Woodcock is uniquely qualified to write about circus history. He is "real circus," which is to say he grew up in the business and except for a hitch in the military, has never been out of it. He has, in fact, threatened to run away and join a home. On his mother's side his circus heritage goes back to Hiram Orton, the mid-nineteenth century Wisconsin showman. His father, William Woodcock, Sr., ran away from a Tennessee military academy in 1920 to join the Rhoda Royal Circus, and stayed in the business until his death in 1963. A brilliant man with a photographic memory, he had two passions, elephants and circus history.

Buckles, as the younger Woodcock is universally known, has followed in his father's footsteps, despite the elder Woodcock's admonition that the three essential characteristics of a first-class elephant man were a strong back, a weak mind, and a savage disposition, all three of which he believed his son lacked.

Nevertheless, his father taught him the pachyderm business to good results, as Woodcock recently retired as the doyen of American elephant trainers after a distinguished career that included stints on Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple and Vargas. His elephant Anna May, also recently



retired, was until recently in the Woodcock family for over fifty years, surely a record for continuous ownership of an exotic animal.

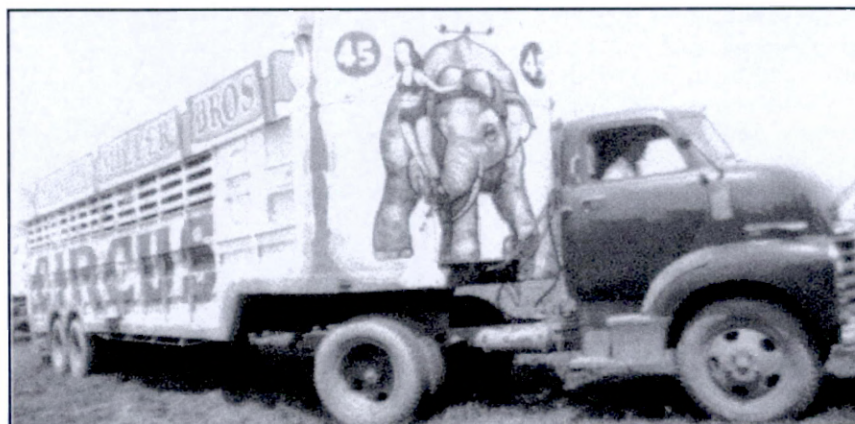
He also has his father's love of field show history, and like him, is recognized as an authority on the subject, particularly circus elephants where his knowledge is unrivaled. From 1958 until shortly before his death in 1963, Woodcock, Sr. shared his remarkable collection of circus photographs with Bandwagon readers through "Bill Woodcock's Circus Album," a reoccurring feature in which pictures from his collection were published with a bit of explanation. The following photos and short essays by his son continue that wonderful tradition. It is, then, with great pleasure that we reintroduce "Bill Woodcock's Circus Album" to a new generation of readers.

My family never owned a car. Having always been with shows that

provided cook house and state room we never needed one. My paternal grandmother left us a nice home in Hot Springs, Arkansas within walking distance of stores and a bus stop. In high school I had a good buddy with a car which provided the means to terrorize the damsels. I might add that he is now a gentleman of leisure in California.

This all ended in the early 1950s when D. R. Miller bank rolled my father's elephant act. For a driver, the first year he sent the water wagon driver, Harper Harwick, who, owing to the amputation of his right arm at the elbow, and this being a time of insensitivity, was called Wingy.

The next year I was out of school and working on concessions or some such when my folks pulled on the lot. They were making fairs for the





Barnes & Carruthers booking agency, and having a week off, they traveled with the Kelly-Miller Circus. By this time Wingy was long gone and my dad had to scuffle around the midways to find a driver.

Sometimes he found himself at the mercy of a professional driver being paid by the mile. When told of this, D. R. immediately tracked me down and told me to be at trailer #45 in the morning which was the truck he always drove. Thus I learned to drive. This in itself would make a good TV sit-com, what with me grinding gears and D. R. yelling and chewing his cigar.

Had it not been for this quirk of fate, I would still be with Carson & Barnes on concessions and driving #45. As it turned out, my dad was reluctantly forced into showing me how to get around elephants, but more importantly I got to the man. I would spend many an hour driving down the highway and listening to elephant stories and tales of when circuses had "Wagons of wood, and men of iron." This photo is #45 with Whitey Thorn at the wheel.

The other photo is of #45 upon its arrival at the Kelly-Miller Circus winter quarters during the winter of 1947-1948. D. R. was anxious to see how many elephants he could fit in it. Left to right on top are Joe Pete, Whitey Thorn, John Carroll and D. R. Miller. Seems that I recall someone

saying that this had been originally built to carry 50 gallon drums.

Claude "Slivers" Madison was Walter McClain's assistant in the elephant department for years on the Barnes show. He once told me an interesting story. In 1938 as the train was pulling into Redfield, South Dakota he heard a commotion out on the vestibule. He stepped out and saw a huge tent in the distance. As the train drew nearer and he could make out the title on the wagons, he realized it was part of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey big top. To me, the most remarkable thing was that of all the people Slivers talked with that day, no one knew this was in the works. Ringling ele-

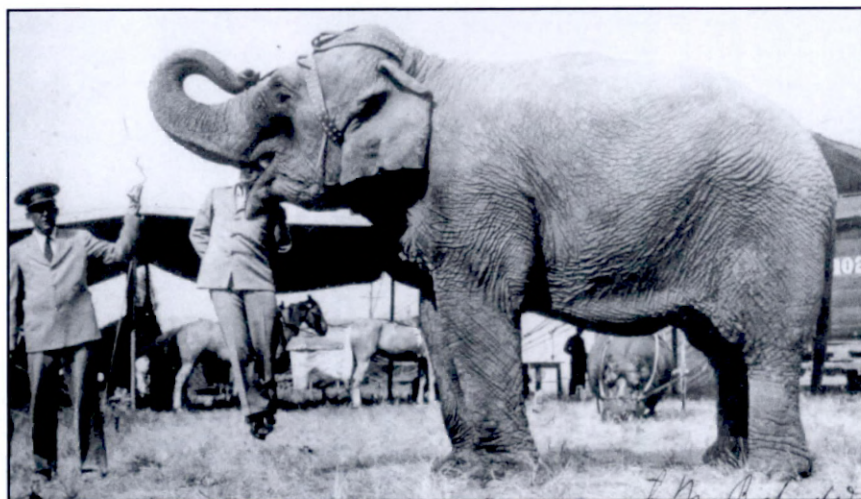
phant boss Larry Davis awaited them on the lot with Big Modoc, the two small African elephants Pouqua and Sudan, and Barnum Queen who served as their anchor.

Eventually, when the show returned to Sarasota, Walter confided to Slivers that he had just been placed in charge of all the elephants. Davis was being kept in the dark since the show had booked fifteen elephants on Orrin Davenport's Shrine dates and they needed him to make those dates while McClain broke a dozen or so Ringling elephants for harness since the baggage horses were now long gone. Slivers said he was sent with Davis on the dates and was told to get a feel for the elephants, but more importantly to work on their feet so there would be one less job to do when he and the bulls returned to quarters.

Actually, Mack MacDonald ran the department on the Shrine dates. Davis was a hotel guy who would arrive at show time.

One day when Davis discovered Slivers with an elephant up on two tubs filing her feet he demanded to know just who in the hell said he could do that. When told it was Walter, Davis immediately stormed off to find Pat Valdo to get this matter settled. Slivers said Davis never returned and by show time he was forced into trying to figure out the routine and work his act. He added that by the time the Davenport dates were over, the elephants worked pretty well.

This is a picture of Pat Valdo and Walter McClain on the Barnes show with Ringling-Barnum features in





1938. The lady on the left is Evelyn Burns. Walter's wife was named Evelyn, so maybe this is her. The other two are Dianne Lovette and Patty Pallee.

This is Alonzo Dever doing the head carry with Ruth on the Al G. Barnes Circus. Joe Metcalfe at left is receiving the accolades. During the winter of 1949-1950 my dad trained eight young elephants for the Miller family in Hugo, Oklahoma. He had a good crew including Alonzo, Fred Logan and Smokey Jones. The elephants were Jenny, Kay, Hattie, Barbara, Anna May, Norma, Hazel and Sally. The first five made up the center ring act my dad worked that season. Hazel was only on the show two seasons and was sold to Beers-Barnes. After that she was on Hoxie Bros. until her death. Sally was almost grown when she was trained. She remained with the Kelly-Miller Circus for ten seasons and then went to Busch Gardens in Tampa.

The winter all this training occurred, the Cole & Walters Circus was framed. Herb Walters, the owner, and his family were Rep Show people (Repitory Theater). The Millers supplied the equipment and animals. My dad picked out three big elephants for that show, Daisy, Victoria and Jess, plus the punk Norma. Somehow, her name became Norma Jean while there. Daisy was original-

ly with the Gollmar Bros. Circus. The other two were among four elephants bought from Ringling-Barnum during the winter of 1947-1948.

I might add that Vic was cross-eyed and had a blind spot directly in front. When you called her, you had to hold your hand out or she might bump you. When she waltzed in the act, she held her trunk and tail straight out, feeling for quarter poles and such.

Anyway, my dad sent Alonzo out with this herd to Cole & Walters, but early into the season he dropped dead from a heart attack. Alonzo had been in charge of the elephants with the Cole show from 1939 to 1941, and

had come to Kelly-Miller from the Mills show. His replacement was a young man who happened to be on the show and got his first chance to work elephants, Wally Ross.

I never met Joe Metcalfe. He started out with Gentry Bros. in 1910, and in his career he supervised a lot of elephants. He was with Barnes, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Robbins Bros. and various Mugivan and Bowers shows, but he never stayed anywhere very long. Metcalfe autographed this picture in 1933, but his last year on the Barnes show was 1931.

The last picture is Sells-Floto on a muddy lot in Ogdensburg, New York on May 30, 1930. The man in the blanket coat is Johnny Agee, long-time Ringling Bros. Equestrian Director. The elephant man behind his right shoulder is George French and the man with the cane ahead of the first team is Bill Woodcock. The tusker is Young Snyder, so called because he replaced the original Snyder who died in 1920. He was sometimes referred to as "Yank Show Billy," having come from Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus. This was his last year on the Floto show. Tom Mix was the show's feature this season and he presented Agee's horses in the show.





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Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART THIRTY-EIGHT

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the dates the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Daily Gazette.

October 20, 1917

The advance agents of the big shows years ago were always on the lookout to discover new towns, those on the boom, and although they might not have 15,000 or 20,000 inhabitants, if they were the live kind and growing fast, they were sometimes better show towns than those of three or four times their size. The advance agent of the Adam Forepaugh show was always looking for this kind of a town, and finally he discovered one by the name of Philipsburg, which was some eighteen miles off the main line of the Pennsylvania Road with a short line running from Altoona, Pennsylvania up to the new booming town of Philipsburg. This city was located about eighteen miles up in the mountains, and because of the steep grade and winding around the mountains, it was only possible to take three or four cars up the mountains at one time. This was done by two engines, one ahead and the other pushing behind. After ascending the top of the mountains, they had to be taken around a sharp curve, which was known as "The Little Horse Shoe." Had it been on the other line of the Pennsylvania Road, it would have been very much more famous and advertised than the one near Altoona which has been famous on that line and traveled for more than half a century. On account of the slow progress of getting the 60-foot cars of the show up the mountainside, it was long before daylight in the morning that the sleepers of the show were taken up and everyone around the show was up and

looking out and taking in the wonderful "horse shoe" bend. While the sleepers moved slowly around the sharp curve, we could look into the valley a mile away and see several cars that had left the track years before and rolled down the steep mountain. From the sleepers they looked like toy wagons.

To say that the people around the show did not enjoy this dangerous trip is stating it very light. Everyone around the show during the day was talking about how dangerous it was to make this short curve, and many of them decided to stay back and not go on that dangerous train which left early in the morning. Adam Forepaugh knew that there was much unrest among the people and more especially in the dressing room among the performers. As soon as the show was over in the afternoon, he went back to the dressing room and told them how foolish they were to be afraid to go down. There was a regular passenger train, and he told them he was not afraid in the least. After the evening show was over he and his wife were counting the tickets, and Mr. Forepaugh said to me, "Dave, you are not afraid, are you? I had engaged a room at the hotel and I would be willing to pay four times the price rather than take the chance

Three John Robinson main street lithographers. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless other wise credited.



to go down the mountains in our cars. Adam Forepaugh insisted that there was no danger in going down in the cars and in the passenger train and that he and his wife would not think of staying back.

There were twenty-five or thirty of us that went to the hotel that evening. Looking over the register book, I found a man and his wife registered as Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dokes, from some small town in Pennsylvania, the name of which I have forgotten. But instead of having the clerk or landlord register "Adam Forepaugh," he wrote the names in the book himself as I knew his writing, I soon discovered that he and his wife were registered there under an assumed name. I left a call for myself at 5 o'clock. As soon as I was dressed, I rapped on Mr. Forepaugh's door and said, "Mr. and Mrs. Dokes, it is time that you were up." The old gentleman knew my voice in a second, and he said, "Go down and tend to your business. Mr. and Mrs. Dokes will get up when they get ready." From that day on, as long as Adam Forepaugh lived, whenever he would get a joke on any of the boys, all they would have to say would be "How is Mr. Dokes?" The name of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Dokes was never forgotten around the show.

Philipsburg at that time was a newly discovered mining town and we did an immense business, but on account of the hazardous trip, the show never exhibited there again.

C. A. Lawrence of the John Robinson show, who has joined the army at Rockford, Illinois, had quite an experience during the summer. C. A. "Dud" Lawrence, well known to many circus and amusement folks, who for the past season has been lithographer on car No. 1 of the John Robinson circus, went to Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois, recently and is now connected with Co. "A" motor supply train. Lawrence experienced more difficulty in being drafted than most of the Chicago men. He registered at Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, received his identification card in Cambridge, Ohio, passed the examination in Galesburg, Illinois, received his first call while the car was at Little Rock, Arkansas got his second call at Walnut Ridge, Oklahoma, and

received his last wire at Monroe, Louisiana. From Monroe he went to Jacksonville, Illinois, to spend the day with his mother, then returned to Chicago and is now doing his best to serve Uncle Sam at Rockford. When Lawrence heads the American army in its march up the Berlin streets, he will not doubt look at the Kaiser's palace and quickly decide the many good places for lithographs for the Robinson show, and it will be too bad that he will have none to place in the windows of the domicile of the great German ruler.

I spent Monday last in Chicago and as the business for which I went there was transacted in the morning, I had all the afternoon to look over the city. In the afternoon I walked to the Lake Front to look over the old show grounds where I had spent weeks at a time for many years. Back in the early 80's when we showed there under canvas, facing Michigan Avenue and running back to the lake, the waves from the lake at that time could come within twenty or thirty feet of the canvas. just across the street a little two story red brick building was known as Gillman's corner. A man by the name of Billy Gillman had a buffet and restaurant on that corner and with his family lived in a flat overhead.

On Monday I could locate Gillman's corner, but now one of the big Chicago skyscrapers is located there, and in place of the waves near the canvas, it is built up for more than a mile and a half. Yet I thought I could locate within twenty feet of where the old ticket wagon used to stand, and where, in the extreme heat of the summer, I would take a Turkish bath, afternoon and evening with the thermometer more than 100 in the wagon and thousands of people were clamoring for tickets. After I had taken a survey of the lake and had seen many changes, I boarded a street car and went down to the south side to State and Twenty-second Streets where we showed several times on a piece of ground consisting of about ten acres which at that time was more than fifteen feet below the street. On this lot, the same

as on the lake front, thousands of people were turned away. There also I found the old ground built up with scarcely a vacant lot. This brought back many memories of the past and incidents that happened which would never have come to my mind if I had not taken this trip.

If the reader can get one-tenth the enjoyment out of this that I did on Monday, I will then feel that you have at least been interested.

October 27, 1917

From the beginning of my career in the circus business, which was with a wagon show belonging to Burr Robbins, on account of the long drives, a few of which meant "pack up" and go the minute after the evening show was over, I certainly thought at that time that my troubles were many. It fell to me to find a more direct and a better road to the next town and to lead the entire show over the road and see that the last wagon arrived. But it was only a few years later that Burr Robbins met with a terrible accident under the Court Street bridge which came so near causing him his life. This accident happened on January 13, 1880, and as but little had been done to fit out and organize a show for the coming season, it naturally fell to me.

Wagon makers, harness makers and blacksmiths had to be put to work to get the show in readiness for the coming season, and it was many a morning I would be on the job at the winter quarters at 5 o'clock and remain there until after dark at night. While I was uptown buying

A Burr Robbins trading card. Circus World Museum collection.



leather for the harness makers and iron for the horse shows, a young man from the rural district dropped in at winter quarters and asked for the manager of the show. He happened to inquire of the old timers, who soon sized him up as a "tenderfoot," and called Spencer Alexander, better known as Delavan, the boss hostler, and said to him that a young man was looking for a position. Delavan asked him in what department he expected to work and he said, "I am an all around man, but I have never rode a horse bareback standing up, but presume that I could soon learn and I think I would prefer to work in the ring, at least at the start as a clown."

As the ring barn was already opened and a few of the people were practicing, Delavan soon saw that there was a chance for some fun and sent to the barn for a ring horse. He had the young man strip himself to his underwear and told him that would be the proper thing to do and to try the riding act. They buckled a belt around him and fastened what was called a mechanical belt which was a long arm running from the center of the pole out over the horse, rope put through a pulley on this mechanical arm, as you might call it, which followed the horse. Two men would have a hold of the end of the rope in case the young man lost his balance.

It was not long until the news spread that Tenderfoot was doing a bareback act, and all the employees in every department were seen in the ring to see the fun.

The young man could not keep his balance for a moment and it was then that the men would pull on the rope and swing him high in the air much to his delight. He was then let down and was again swung high into the air and let down onto the horse's back. After this had gone on for something like one-half an hour, Mrs. Robbins heard the yelling over at the residence and knew there must be something wrong. She threw a shawl over her head and started for the ring, but the lookout soon gave the alarm and everybody

escaped through the back door, including Delavan, the boss hostler, who was posing as manager and had already promised the man a job for the season at a fabulous salary. When Mrs. Robbins arrived at the ring, the only occupant was the old white ring horse and the new rider, standing in the center, and wondering what had become of all his new made friends.

Mrs. Robbins said: "Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

He said, "I have been engaged by the manager here to make myself generally useful around the show during the summer, and while I am doing a clown's work, I expect to fit myself for a bareback rider."

Mrs. Robbins said, "Young man, fit yourself into the clothes that you came in here with and get off the farm as fast as you can and never let me see you here again."

In a few minutes after this happened, I arrived from uptown, and it fell to me to find out who was responsible for what had been going on. I said, "There is no question about who was at the head of it but Delavan."

And while they did not object to their having a little fun, they were afraid that they might injure the man's health and the show would be responsible for it. The young man left the winter quarters and was never seen again. When I talked to Delavan about it, he insisted that he thought he would make a high-class man, and it was late in the season and they were very foolish to dispense with his services. That was the last time they dared to take a chance on a newcomer.

Many times in the spring, when tenderfoots would show up, the old timers would always fix up a scheme to have their fun before they would allow him to go.

As has been the custom with the big shows for many years, the best acts with the shows were those that attracted the most attention and applause.

A big engagement of the past week was that of May Wirth, by Charles Ringling, whereby the clever equestrienne will again be featured with Ringling Brothers again next season. The signatures were exchanged after a long conference and the contract calls for one of the



May Wirth, Ringling Bros. feature lady rider.

largest salaries ever paid under the big tops. Miss Wirth is one of the best box office attractions in the circus world. Her many new equestrienne feats caused no end of comment wherever the Ringling show appeared this year.

The following are a few of the boys who recently left the big white tops and are now eating their beans at Uncle Sam's cook tent, and from letters received from them, they all seem glad to be more satisfied with the change, and it is safe to say that the hardships they will have to endure will be faced without a murmur.

Frank Burns, the popular clown, has wired that he is now in camp waiting to do his bit.

Billy Lloyd is the father of a bouncing baby, which means another addition to the famous Indian riding act. Billy is sure a proud father. Incidentally the Lloyds will be a big attraction with the Pabilones Circus at Havana this winter. This will be the second season with that show.

Lew Graham, whom many call the King of Orators, kept the side show continuously at Sulphur Springs, from 11:30 to 5:30 and got nice money. It is worth the price of admission just to listen to those "twelve-cylinder."

November 3, 1917

John McDermott of this city arrived home on Friday night from

his summer's work in advertising car number three of Ringling Brothers show. Young McDermott tells many interesting stories of his trip during the summer from coast to coast.

The one of the most interest to me was the reception held in car number three at San Antonio, Texas, where Charles A. Davis was former press agent and a close friend of mine for many years when we were with the Adam Forepaugh show back in the early 80's.

You will recollect that he was supposed to have died some three years ago, and I wrote a lengthy obituary which he later had the pleasure of reading himself. It was not so long after that I received a letter from him thanking me for the nice things I said about him.

He said, "It is seldom that anyone has the pleasure of reading his own obituary."

Charles Davis spent the day and long into the night until advertising car number three was hitched on the passenger train to be taken to the next stand with the boys. Before the car left, the boys took up a collection and raised a purse of \$25 which they handed to him saying they hoped he might visit them another season.

Charles Gollmar of Baraboo, Wisconsin who for many years was one of the active managers of Gollmar Brothers show, has signed a contract with Jess Willard of the 101 Ranch Buffalo Bill show, and is now with the show in the south. When they arrive in winter quarters, he will look after the remodeling of the show for the coming season. Mr. Willard was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Gollmar as his years of experience with shows will fit him for this work.

The following is a list of the big shows and where they will spend the winter and be fitted out for the coming season.

The last route card of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus for this season was handed out some time ago. The closing date was October 23rd at West Baden, Indiana where the show will again spend the winter. Robert Stickney and wife, Emma, left the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus and will sail with others from New Orleans to join the Pabilones Circus

in Havana, Cuba.

The John Robinson Circus will close its 1917 season at Brownsville, Tennessee Monday, November 12th. There is still a discussion among circus agents as to who dug Brownsville up after it had been neglected for so many years. Previous to 1906 no circus of any size visited this city.

For the past two weeks, there has been much speculation as to the closing dates of the Barnum & Bailey show and Ringling Brothers. It is now definitely announced that the former will wind up its tour in Richmond, Virginia while the latter will finish the season at Memphis, Tennessee, November 5th and go back to its winter quarters at Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The number one car of the Ringling show concluded its season Saturday, October 13th, at Memphis. Not one day was lost and the car completed the season a day ahead of schedule time. Under the capable direction of Manager George W. Goodhart the personnel of the car crew has been kept practically intact through the year. With the exception of one man who was called away by the draft, but two changes have been made all season--quite a remarkable record for any circus car this year. W. H. Horton was in Memphis to see the car close and on Sunday morning the red and yellow "home" left for Chicago and thence to Baraboo.

The following are the winter quarters of the various shows and proprietors:

Al G. Barnes, Al G. Barnes, Prop., Venice, California

Barnum & Bailey, Ringling brothers, Prop., Bridgeport, Connecticut

Ringling Brothers Circus, Ringling brothers, Props., Baraboo, Wisconsin

Sells-Floto Circus, H. B. Gentry, General Manager; Denver, Colorado

Buffalo Bill Wild West, Jess Willard, Prop., Jacksonville, Florida

Yankee Robinson Circus, Fred Buchanan, Manager, Granger, Iowa

Some three weeks ago, Ringling Brothers show and the Jess Willard 101 Ranch-Buffalo Bill show was at Waco, Texas and




George W. Goodhart, manager of the Ringling No 1 advance car.

turned away many people. More than fifty percent of the audience were soldier boys and many of them from this part of Wisconsin.

It is seldom that a show of their magnitude show the same date in the same town, and the only time that I can recall where the Adam Forepaugh show showed the same date was in Philadelphia when the Adam Forepaugh show was on North Broad Street and Barnum & Bailey on South Broad Street, where they showed every afternoon and evening for two weeks. It is seldom that performers in this part of the world leave for an engagement in far off Java, but next week a dozen or more

The final Barnum & Bailey 1917 route card.

				
SEASON 1917				
OFFICIAL ROUTE				
DATE	TOWN	STATE	R. R.	MILES
Oct. 14	New Orleans	Louisiana	L. C. R. R.	129
" 15	Mobile	Alabama	L. & N. R. R.	139
" 16	Pensacola	Florida	"	104
" 17	Montgomery	Alabama	"	163
" 18	Columbus	Georgia	C. of Ga. Ry.	85
" 19	Macon	"	"	100
Oct. 22	Athens	Georgia	Georgia R. R.	147
" 23	Augusta	"	"	116
" 24	Columbia	S. Carolina	Southern Ry.	82
" 25	Charlotte	N. Carolina	"	109
" 26	Hazlet	"	S. A. L. Ry.	71
" 27	Raleigh	"	"	96
SUNDAY				
Oct. 29	Wilson	N. Carolina	N. S. R. R.	50
" 30	Washington	"	"	56
" 31	Norfolk	Virginia	"	136
Nov. 1	Petersburg	"	N. & W. Ry.	82
" 2	Richmond	"	S. A. L. Ry.	23
END OF SEASON				
	Bridgeport	Connecticut	B. P. & P., Penna and N. Y. N. H. & H. R. R.	396

American performers will leave for that country.

And yet the average performer with the circus is always anxious for the winter engagement and it is seldom that a high class performer is idle during the winter.

In my time in the business the Orrin Brothers of Cuba were always in this country early in the fall looking for towns, and they at that time would come to the United States and hire talented men and guarantee them work for four months, usually opening their show by December 1st. By guaranteeing them work for four months, the average man was glad to make the trip when they were stationed permanently at Havana where the Orrin Brothers of the large Amphitheater, much after the style of the Coliseum Chicago and the Madison Square Garden in New York. While a few of them would go over to London for an engagement, this made a long and expensive trip. It was only the high priced acts that could afford to take this trip on account of the expense.

On account of the great opening of the Hippodrome in New York early in the winter and the Majestic Circuits through this country, they were always looking for the best of talent. Very few high-class performers leave this country for the winter engagements and many of them are built up now in different theaters for the entire winter.

The Barnum show will open the season of 1918 at Madison Square early in March and the Ringling show at the Coliseum in Chicago for a five or six week engagement. This shortens up the winter engagement for all the performers who are fortunate enough to be engaged with either of the shows for the coming year. The Ringling show was expected to arrive at Baraboo, their winter quarters, either Friday night or Saturday morning of this week, and as this has been a long season, it is safe to say that the people will be glad to arrive "home" and enjoy a much needed rest.

Gertie and Aerial Wirth, relatives of May Wirth, who were with the St. Leon family when engaged by the Ringling Brothers for two seasons in America, have joined

the Willison Circus in Java and are making good their novel aerial act.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wirth (Adele Willison), have rejoined the Willison show. Mr. Wirth has been appointed equestrian director, a position he held for nine years with that show and only relinquished it on account of marriage to Albert Mariniani.

On April 25, 1917, W. M. Taylor enlisted in the Naval Reserves as chief master at arms and was at once assigned to shore duty under the United States Department of Justice as special employee, which job he is still holding down. He would like to hear from some of the old "boys" with whom he has trouped on the Wallace, Gentry Brothers, Cole Brothers, Al G. Barnes, John Robinson, Buffalo Bill, Ringling Brothers, Gollmar Brothers and the Sells-Floto shows. His address is in care of the U. S. Department of Justice, Box 480, Newport News, Virginia.

November 10, 1917

A few days ago I received a letter from the Barnum & Bailey show giving me a list of the boys who had enlisted in Uncle Sam's Army and a few others who will join as soon as the show closes which is at Memphis, Tennessee, on Thursday of this week, November 8th. The list runs up to over forty.

Many times this summer it was almost impossible for shows to move from one town to another and erect their canvasses in time to give two performances for lack of help in each town. Just what the outcome will be for next season is what is bothering many of the managers of the large shows.

The Barnum & Bailey shows will soon finish its 1917 tour. The big circus has had its share of hardships this season on account of shortage of workingmen, but has lost but few days. At Pensacola the lot was in bad condition and the show had to lose the night performance. The big show was side walled and the afternoon show was given at 6:30 p.m. to a turn-a-way house.

At Montgomery, Alabama, Lieut. Markey, Mrs. Markey and Lieut. Eden paid the show a visit. Lieut. Markey spoke very highly of the show folks and how well they were entertained.

An unusual meeting of the Loyal Order of Moose No. 35 was held at Athens, Georgia during which it was decided to give a farewell blowout at Wilson, North Carolina Sunday, October 28. The new members who went in at Athens are James Morrison, John J. McMahon, Capt. W. E. Wells and Walter Leufert. The Barnum & Bailey Moose wish to think the folks who are not members of the order for their donation to the Moose War Fund. The lodge had offered \$25 in gold to any member who gets the most candidates and Eddie Cummings is in the lead so far.

The buying of Liberty Bonds was the main topic of conversation last week in the dressing room and all other departments. Over \$3,000 worth has been purchased. The dressing room and the front door of the show were decorated with big Liberty lithographs.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was billed to give the final show of the season at West Baden, Indiana Tuesday, October 23, but arrived from Louisville, Kentucky in a blinding snow storm, declared the show off and went right into winter quarters.

Ed Ballard announces through Manager Charles Gollmar that the

Charles A. Gollmar, manager of the 1917 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus.



show will be greatly enlarged during the winter.

William Curtis, general superintendent of the show, has designed a new pole raising device which does the work of forty men with two.

Samuel McCracken, for many years manager of the Barnum & Bailey Circus, is arranging a genuine pretentious circus tournament which he will stage at the armory of the First Field Artillery at Broadway and Sixty-eighth Street on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 14, 15, 16 and 17. The show will be conducted under the auspices of the Eighth Coast Artillery, New York Guard, Major S. G. Teets, commanding, for the benefit of the Eight Coast Defense Command, N.G.U.S. whose men in khaki are manning the forts of New York Harbor and protecting the lives and homes of the residents of that city.

Mr. McCracken is calling his organization the Great American Circus, a title familiarly and favorably remembered hereabouts as utilized by Mr. McCracken when he conducted circus performances in Madison Square Garden for Miss Anne Morgan and her Vavation Association and for the organized Irishmen of the city.

Many of the star performers of the Barnum & Bailey, Ringling Bros. and the Hagenbeck-Wallace circuses have already enlisted for the event. Lupita Perea, whose aerial feats of grace and daring are a sensation of the circus world, and the Joseph DeKoe Troupe of Acrobats, famous throughout the world, will be among the participants. May Wirth, noted equestrienne, is in communication with Mr. McCracken regarding the utilization of her service. The Hart sisters, renowned for their aerial skill and beauty, have signed contracts. Several of the clowns from the R. T. Richards Supreme Show of the World will provoke mirth.

Mr. McCracken has arranged for the presence of an elephant act, comprising five of the animals and he will exhibit a "Colossal Congress of Celebrated Freaks, Collected from Creation's Corners for this Cyclopean Circus."

A street parade from the armory to the business section on Wednesday afternoon, November 14th, will inau-

gurate the festivities. Mr. McCracken promises a gay and glittering cavalcade, rivaling the most ambitious efforts of the biggest traveling tented institutions.

The probability exists that this November Circus is the forerunner of others under Mr. McCracken's management for military benefit to be conducted during the entire winter. He is also considering propositions to undertake the managership of the National Sportsmen's Show and a big Pure Food Show for the government.

I have no doubt the work which Mr. McCracken has got so well started in New York will spread to other cities and even in smaller towns where benefits of this kind can be easily arranged and carried out successfully for the benefit of the war fund, even more ways than one. It is not at all unlikely that Janesville will be on the list before the winter is over, and with our close proximity to Chicago and Baraboo where many show people spend the winter, it would seem to me that it would be an easy matter to give a show of this kind for two or three days and be a grand success.

I have been asked so many times and by so many different people if I do not think that the life of the average person traveling with the circus was not a short one. If I could give you an idea of the people who have put in most of their life in the business and half of them over three score years and ten and still hale and hearty and traveling with the White Tops.

I received a letter this morning from an old friend who just left this country for an engagement of four months with the circus in Havana, Cuba. He is past seventy years of age and he and his wife are still acting. Any person in the audience might say he wasn't any more than 40 or 45 years of age.

John Worland, who for many years has been in the circus and who is still an all-round athlete, is close to seventy year of age, and although he is out of the business, he is still a younger man than his years.

Pete Conklin, who was a clown and athlete in Burr Robbins show in the middle 70's, is still living with his son in Brooklyn, New York and the late James Knellville, who was a famous

rider more than half century ago, lived to 82 years' of age. As for myself, no performer in the business has put in as many hours as I did and have at least one hour in the afternoon and one hour in the evening. My work was even more strenuous than any performer that I have known.

James Demott, our famous rider in the early days, lived to a ripe old age, and many others that I might mention who commenced in the business with the early wagon shows more than half century ago.

I would have to say although their work was very hard and strenuous at times, the outdoor life of the circus was certainly healthy, and I think a large percent would be as likely to live out their allotted time as though they were on the farm or in a mercantile business in the city.

November 17, 1917

Through the courtesy of an old friend, a few days ago I was handed a route book of the great Ringling show for the entire season which gives all the different towns that they showed in during the season of 1917, also the distances from one stand to the next and the number of miles traveled during the entire season.

As this official route book was compiled by an old friend of mine with whom I trooped back in the late 70's with the Burr Robbins show, it helped to make it all the more inter-

The front cover of the 1917 Ringling Bros. Circus route book.



esting to me. This official route book was compiled by Jules Turnour, an English clown, who came over from England in the 70's and who commenced his season's work in this country with the Burr Robbins show in '79. Julius has been a clown and a "Wanamaker," as the boys call it, with the Ringling show after he had been postmaster and mail carrier for the show for more than twenty years. This is certainly recommendation enough for his faithfulness in the business.

It was along about the first of April that the heavy trains bearing the Ringling show passed through Janesville for Chicago, where the show opened the season of 1917 on April 7 and closed the Chicago engagement on April 29, going direct to St. Louis where they showed for five days, after which they took to the one day stands.

The show then started in a southeasterly direction from Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia. Two weeks after leaving St. Louis they showed in Baltimore and Washington, and after taking in all the larger towns throughout the southeast, they started back through the west.

They showed in Boston one week where they turned away people several times during their engagement and it is said that in many of the large cities hundreds of people would come into the tent late for no other purpose than to witness the riding of the great Mae Wirth, who was the only big feature in the show this season. There were hundreds of people who did not seem to care to stay through the entire performance, but would pay the same admission just to witness the famous Mae Wirth in her wonderful bareback act.

The Ringling show during the season probably had less trouble with their working people than any of the other big shows, as many of the old-timers stayed through the entire season. Whenever it was possible to get into the next town for any reasonable length of time, the big tops were always up in time for two shows. The show got into Lawton on time, but there was a terrific wind blowing all day, so hard that it was impossible to get up the tents for the afternoon performance, but they were all put in readiness as soon as the wind went

down toward evening. The big tops went up in a hurry and the evening performance was given, with the people packed down to the ring bank.

From Oklahoma they took a southwesterly course down through Texas and along the west, taking in all the principal cities in California. At Los Angeles they showed three days, turning away people most of the time and I doubt if any show during the season traveled more miles than did the Ringling show.

The show has been back in its winter quarters in Baraboo for several days, and after a rest for a short time, the anvils in the blacksmith shop will sound and the woodworkers and painters will all get busy again remodeling the great show for the coming season of 1918.

The show closed this season at Memphis, Tennessee on November 5. From there they made a trip home in four sections and when they arrived in Baraboo, the citizens' gave them a warm welcome.

The statistics of the season are as follows: Number of weeks, 30; number of days, 214; number of show days, 184; number of performances, 356; towns visited, 145; total mileage, 18,115; longest run of the season, 615 miles from Fort Collins, Colorado, to Salt Lake, Utah; shortest run of the season, 4 miles from Lynn to Salem, Massachusetts. The following is a list of the towns in which it was only possible to get up the tents in time to give but one performance: Kokomo, Indiana, July 13; Monmouth, Illinois, July 19; Dodge City, Kansas, August 7; Fort Collins, Colorado, August 11; Pocatello, Idaho, August 15; Baker, Oregon, August 17; Wanatchee, Washington, August 21; Douglas, Arizona, September 19. Arkansas City, Kansas, substituted for Enid, Oklahoma, August 3. Chico, California, missed, August 29.

The Jess Willard-Buffalo Bill Wild West show after a season of thirty weeks, closed at Jacksonville, Florida, Saturday night, November 3, and will spend the winter there. According to the season route book of the show just issued, the aggregation gave 353 performances, visited 159 towns in 25 states and traveled 9,657 miles. One performance was given at Catskill, New York, Richmond, Indiana, and Hot Springs, Arkansas,

and a day and date was played with Ringling Bros. circus at Waco, Texas Sept. 26. The show made three week stands in Philadelphia, Boston and Brooklyn; one three-day stand in Baltimore, and four two-day stands in Washington, Cleveland, Detroit and Atlanta. The tour was opened April 8 at Norfolk, Virginia, where the show wintered last year.

Among visitors in Chicago this week was Rhoda Royal, equestrian director of the Sells-Floto circus, who jumped in from the show to close a contract with the Boston Store for a two-ring circus to open November 24 and continue until Christmas. Mr. Royal has been furnishing the Boston Store with Christmas entertainment for several seasons and this year the circus will be bigger and better than ever before as he has been allotted additional floor space and his contract calls for a complete show.

On Wednesday last I spent the day in Chicago. In the afternoon, as I had an hour or more to spend, I started for the Showman's Club on Dearborn Street and visited with several old friends and made a few new ones. While visiting with two or three old-timers, one by the name of "Uncle Billy," a young man joined the party and said, "Uncle Billy, you are not going out next season. I reckon as you are not looking very well." Uncle Billy has been in the circus business

Frank P. Spellman, manager of the U. S. Motorized Circus.



for at least a half century, and he has been known as a man of original savings. He immediately threw out his chest and answered, "Johnnie, I want to tell you one thing, and it is this, that in any work I have ever done, from making the announcements in the big show to the managing and talking in front of all side shows, I will hitch up with you any day and go."

On December 5 the Clubman's League will give an entertainment and buffet luncheon on Dearborn Street in Chicago. Many of the big stars will volunteer their services and a famous caterer will look after the luncheon. Later in the season the annual banquet will be given. It will be simply a "get together" good time for all the circus people who have to spend the season on the road.

November 24, 1917

It was some four years ago while visiting at the winter quarters of the great Ringling show in Baraboo that I said to Al Ringling, "It would certainly seem to me that the two big shows, both the Ringling and Barnum, could be cut down at least 20 percent in many performances, not the ring performances, but the big cages and tableaux, cars and horses, which would also mean the big team drivers and not affect the drawing powers of the shows."

The expenses of running these enormous shows have grown so in the last few years that in many ways they have more than doubled, and yet the price of admission remains the same. It would certainly seem to me that in the coming summer they will be obliged to make some radical changes, either in the size of the shows or charge more admission. It is not at all likely that the admission fee will be changed, but the size of the shows might be reduced to where it would be possible for them to be taken over the road in three sections in place of four which they have to have now. This would not affect the size of the canvas or the performance.

The average patron of a show would just as soon see a parade three-quarters of a mile long as one a mile long, which is practically the length of the parades of the two great shows of today. It would do away with

seventy-five to one hundred horses and many of the big team drivers. When you take into consideration that all salaries of show people have been nearly doubled and that for the past season they have paid in many cases more than four times as much for hay and oats as in former years, the great increase in expenses is plain to be seen. It would seem to me that in the coming season of 1918 something should be done to lessen the cost of running these mammoth institutions.

Some years ago the transportation of these shows was from \$300 to \$400 a run, while today the transportation from one town to another will run from \$600 to \$1,000. Hay, oats and corn could be bought for less than one-half the price they are paying today. Last spring in St. Louis the Ringling show paid \$2.65 a bushel for a carload of potatoes which a few years ago could be bought possibly for 30 to 35 cents. But the show got by last year and made a little money besides. It is fair to say that no show ever covered the miles in one season than the Ringling show did this last season. I certainly think that the owners and managers of the big shows will be obliged to make changes of some kind, for they will surely have to adhere to the old rule, "safety first." Yet it may be possible that they will try to fight it out every year in the old way.

It seems to be a settled fact that the new enterprise the United States Circus, will be put on the road the coming spring in a high class way by a New York syndicate, with Frank P. Spellman as organizer and manager of the show proper and Louis E. Cooke advance manager. Mr. Cooke for many years has been one of the high class advance men and during my time in the business he was connected with the Adam Forepaugh show for many years. The following letter will give the reader something of an idea of the magnitude of the new enterprise:

"Frank P. Spellman, president of the United States Circus Corporation, announced today the appointment of Louis E. Cooke as general manager of the advance force of the new motorized circus which the corporation plans to put on the road next season, opening in Toledo, May



6. Mr. Spellman returned to Toledo this week from New York where he closed contracts on behalf of the corporation with Mr. Cooke. The latter assumes his duties on Thursday of this week. Louis E. Cooke was formally connected with the Barnum & Bailey show and also was long identified with the late Col. William F. Cody. He is the dean of circus advance agents and acknowledged one of the most capable men in that line of the business. Since the closing of the Two Bills show several seasons ago, he has been off the road, conducting a large hotel in Newark, New Jersey. 'The United States Circus Corporation is proud to make this announcement regarding Mr. Cook,' said Mr. Spellman. 'We believe he has no superior in the outdoor field in his particular line.' Mr. Cooke will be assisted by a corps of high-class advance agents, several of whom have been identified with him in his previous connections with the Barnum & Bailey and the Buffalo Bill shows. The advance of the new circus will be moved on twenty-five Willys-Knight and Overland cars with a closed car for the personal use of Mr. Cooke on tour. Work is now being rushed on the building of the winter quarters here and all equipment will be assembled as rapidly as the building operations will allow."

William Rolland, equestrian director of the Shipp & Feltus circus, which is now touring South America, died September 21 on board the steamship Itassuce while the company was enroute from Port Alegre to Rio Grandem Brazil it was learned last week. A complication of diseases including a weak heart and lungs and chronic asthma, from which he had suffered for many years, was the

Spellman's United States Circus Corporation letterhead.

cause of his death. Mr. Rolland, who was about 53 years of age, had traveled practically all of his life in the circus business and had toured many parts of the world, including Europe, China, Japan, Mexico, Central and South America. He first appeared in the United States with his father with the old P. T. Barnum show, afterwards being connected with many American circuses. In his younger days he was a good rider and had few equals as a tumbler. He was particularly adapted to the Shipp & Feltus style of circus and had been equestrian director with that show for eight years. He also acted in the same capacity with Orrn Bros. in Mexico and had made many trips with Charline and Frank Gardner. His body was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Rio Grande.

Two weeks ago at one of the "get together" luncheons of the Showmen's League, one of the enjoyable incidents that occurred during the regular program was the presentation to the Showmen's League of a beautiful bronze statue of an elephant resting on a handsome boxwood case, a natural wood, formation representing the work of Mother Nature with the exception of the highly polished finish to which the root had been treated. The elephant is the work of a famous Japanese artist and is hand wrought in genuine bronze, representing not only intrinsic value, but something that can never be replaced, as the same base formation would never be duplicated by nature. The statue was presented to the League by C. G. Entzminger with the compliments of

Takitoogawa, dealers in Japanese merchandise and known throughout the world as the "Vase House." No more appropriate gift could have been made, as the elephant is the emblem of the Showmen's League. In presenting the token Mr. Entzinger gave an interesting talk regarding the making of the statue and the formation of the base. The boxwood tree, from the root of which the base is made, grows among the rocks in the mountains of Japan. It gets the peculiar knotty formation and peculiar shape from being forced to grow in this manner and gains value from the fact that no two roots are ever alike. This particular root is probably two centuries old. The roots are so hard that it is almost impossible to cut them. President Warren accepted the gift for the League in an appropriate speech. H. C. Wilbur instructed the League to purchase a glass case for the elephant and send the bill to him.

December 1, 1917

On Tuesday of this week, I received an invitation urging me to be present at the Showmen's luncheon and entertainment to be held in the club rooms on Dearborn Street on Thursday afternoon and evening, December the 5th. This will be kind of a "get together" meeting and entertainment for the boys that have been on the road all during the summer. The different theaters of Chicago will contribute at least one act for the entertainment and will be for showmen only. I think one or two of these may be held during the winter.

On account of the war and conservation of food, both New York and Chicago banquets which were held last winter on a large scale will be discarded until after the war. At least a letter from New York says that the big banquet and dance which was expected to be held this winter at one of the famous hotels has been voted upon, and it was decided by a unanimous vote of the directors that it would be bad taste to hold any such banquet at the present time.

The luncheon and entertainment to be given next week will be an unpretentious affair and only intended to get the outdoor showmen together for a visit after their separation of more than eight months.



Samuel H. McCracken, circus manager and owner.

Everything pertaining to the entertainment will be furnished gratis by the different show houses of the city and this will be possibly the only entertainment held. The showmen will get together and the old-timers will talk over the past. Many of them will tell of their plans for the coming year and the different shows they expect to be with the coming season.

Some two weeks ago I spent a couple of hours in the club rooms and there met an old friend with whom I had trouped some thirty-five years ago and whom I had not seen in many years. He asked me about many people, many of whom I had not thought of for years. The two men in particular that he asked for was Billy Connors, the boss hostler in the Adam Forepaugh show, and Ed Taylor, the general repairman who had been there ever since the show was organized in '65. This old-timer told me that he had started in the business as a driver with the Forepaugh show in the early '70's, but at the time I knew him there he was connected with the privileges and was a man who could always be depended upon as doing his part well. Ed Taylor that he asked for I have heard nothing of Ed for more than 25 years. He had a tent of his own which was located near the horse tents and it was here that all the repair work on the big wagons was looked after by him. Ed had his own horse and wagon and every few days would come to the ticket wagon and get whatever money he would

ask for to buy stock of all kinds to repair broken down wagons. It did not matter whether Ed Taylor wanted \$10.00 or \$100.00, I always gave it to him and later Ed would bring me the receipt for all his expenditures. He was absolutely honest and held his position as general repairman up to the time that Adam Forepaugh died and the show passed into other hands.

At the luncheon and entertainment next Thursday night, I shall expect to meet all of the old-timers and hundreds of new ones, for there is no one within a reasonable distance from Chicago that will not be there.

A letter from New York states the success of the circus given there for four days for the benefit of the New York Artillery under the management of Samuel McCracken, formerly manager of the Barnum & Bailey show.

The Great American Circus given at the First Field Artillery Armory the past four days, came to a successful close tonight. The affair was under the auspices of the Eighth Coast Artillery Corps of the New York Guard for the benefit of the Eighth Coast Defense Command of the National Guard. It was under the direction of Samuel McCracken.

The program was an elaborate one. A pleasing musical program was rendered by the band of the Eighth C.D.C. and 25th company and Eighth C.D.C.N.G.U.S. from Fort Totten. The program proper opened with maneuvers by the Coast Defense Command and the rifle and drum corps. There was the true circus atmosphere and among the notable performers who appeared were: Madam Maranette in her high-class riding act; Hart Sisters in aerial equestrian art; the Minerva Troupe in a wonderful exhibition of equilibrium; Two Walters, horizontal bar feats; Francette Sisters, contortionists; R. T. Richards' trained elephants; Mosher, Haze and Mosher, comedians and acrobats; The High Flyers in aerial wonders; Flora Bedini, equestrian; the Five Indians, flying trapeze work; Frank Davis, horsemanship; Davis and Bedini, double equestrian feats; Palo Sisters, marvelous serial feats; Duval Brothers, comedians, Flora Brothers, exploits on swinging ladder; Blake's

Comedy circus; Ethel Rensen, coloratura soprano soloist; Tex McLeod and Tommy Kirnan, cowboy feats and a great number of amusing clowns,

The attendance was not only large each night, but the public proved to be good money spenders, patronizing the various sideshows, etc., generously. The souvenir program issued for the occasion was an attractive one.

While the war has played havoc with many a showman by reason of the constant delays and complications in transportation duzing the past couple of months, there is not a bit of doubt in the mind of the writer that the saddest blow of all will be the omission of the Christmas Dinner and Ball of the Outdoor Showmen which was such a great success at the Hotel Astor last year and which at that time was expected to be an annual event.

At the present writing, however, it looks as though the food conservation plans of the government in general and Mr. Hoover in particular will cause the postponement of such celebrations until the war clouds have blown away.

There are in New York at the present time a number of the men who were members of the Executive Committee of the organization that made such a great success of this event last year and on numerous occasions they have entered into informal discussions as to the advisability of holding a big celebration somewhere around the Yuletide season. With one voice almost, they express their desire that such a gathering of outdoor showmen might be held, yet all of them point out that the precedents now being established are such that a display of this kind would be frowned upon rather coldly by the people who most actively are aiding the government in its war preparations and by a number of show folks who are loyal doing their bit in the purchase of Liberty Bonds and the cutting down of their household expenses.

Not only does President Wilson



The R. T. Richards Circus elephants, Diamond, Alice, Lizzie, Annie and Baby Boo, appeared in McCracken's Great American Circus.

and his able aide, Mr. Hoover, daily point the way to programs for entrenchment in the extravagant use of foodstuffs, but the various great organizations of New York City, where the dinner would be held, are equally active in this respect.

It is only natural that this celebration would have to be held in one of the most prominent hotels of New York City. And, lo and behold, early this week, the Hotel Men's Exposition opened at the Grand Central Palace, and as a preliminary thereto the visiting hotel men of the United States and Canada were given a meatless and wheatless luncheon at the Park Avenue Hotel. After this they passed resolutions promising to cooperate with Mr. Hoover in every manner possible. As the hotel men of New York City already have adopted a meatless day each week, one can easily see that a proposition to hold an elaborate banquet would not be met with Hotel Men's Association approval. Another straw which shows the direction of the wind is the fact that when it was suggested a couple of days ago that the newly elected incoming officials of New York City have a big dinner to celebrate the great democratic victory of a week ago, Mayor Elect F. Hylan and other prominent men who headed the winning ticket, promptly squashed the movement as they considered it would be indecorous to hold such a dinner when the government is urging the conservation of foodstuffs.

They flatly refused to even consider an invitation to such a banquet and when old Tammany Hall, the

hungry tiger that has been away from the pie counter for many years, refuses to celebrate because of patriotic grounds, it would be ill-becoming the showmen to flaunt their affluence in the face of a community that is about to go on short rations.

At least this is the consensus of opinion among the members of the executive committee of the last dinner who have discussed the matter informally.

December 8, 1917

On Wednesday morning last I took an early train for Chicago to attend a homecoming which was to be held in the club rooms of the Showmen's League of America, which are located on the fifth floor of the budding located at the corner of Dearborn and Monroe Streets. Soon after my arrival I met an old friend, Ed Cummings, proprietor of the Saratoga Hotel. He said, "Dave, I think we had better walk over to the club rooms and register before the crowd commences to come, for they want everyone to register, and we will have to name our hometown and also the show we were with during the past season of 1917. If we don't register now, we may have to wait a long time, for the boys are coming from almost every state in the union."

It was about 10:30 when we arrived at the club rooms. Even at that time in the morning there were many waiting to register. A few minutes after we had registered I met Fred Collier of this city, who took me in and insisted that I accompany him to the eleventh floor of the Boston store building where Rhoda Royal, the famous trainer of horses and small elephants, was giving a three-ring circus for the benefit of the patrons of the Boston Store. Mr. Royal is filling a four week engagement, giving five shows a day, each show lasting about one hour. He gives two performances in the morning and three in the afternoon, and sure enough, when Fred and I arrived it was a little after 2 o'clock

and the circus was going on in three rings with the old-fashioned blue seats, and the rings were the same as they are in the big show during the summer. They have seats for about 1200 people and as the show is gratis, it is packed at every performance, which means that about 6000 people witness the performances each day.

Fred Collier of this city is one of Rhoda Royal's head trainers and has been with him for the past eight years and no man knows the business from A to Z better than young Collier.

Mr. Royal, who knows more about managing homes and elephants than any man in the country, is an old friend of mine with whom I trouped back in the 80's with the Adam Forepaugh show.

They have dressing rooms there for the performers, stabling for twelve performing horses and three tiny elephants, and a trained donkey who throws everyone who tries to ride him. Young Collier in showing me the smallest elephant said to her, "Tiny, this is a friend of mine, Mr. Watt of Janesville, Wis., who was in this business for many years. Are you glad to see him?" The elephant shook her head two or three times and grunted which Collier insisted meant that she was glad to see me. All of the elephants and horses were hoisted to the eleventh floor of the Boston store budding by a heavy freight elevator and after the spacious floor was cleared up, the circus was in place for the day. This was certainly the first three-ring circus that ever was given on the eleventh floor of a building in the great city.

After leaving the circus we went back to the club rooms where already thousands had registered, and while this was not a banquet it was simply a "get together" meeting of the outdoor showmen and the banquet was what a few years ago would have been called a "Dutch lunch." But as they have been out of style for the last few years, we will just call it a "homecoming and luncheon."

It was certainly interesting to hear the stories that the boys would tell of the past seasons and the trials and troubles they had at different times to get from town to town, many times being late, and help scarce. A few

times it was impossible to get their tents up at all and aerial acts would have to be given in the open.

One young man told a hard luck story that happened to him this summer. He said they had arrived in a town early and had everything in good shape, with thousands of people in town waiting an hour before time for the parade. just about one-half hour before it was time to start, a heavy rain fell and it was impossible to give the parade and the afternoon performance had to be abandoned. In the evening they had a packed house and a good town in prospect for the next day. When they arrived in the next town they found the show lot under more than two feet of water, and as it was the only available show ground in the town, they had to pull out for the next town and desert this one entirely, although the sun was shining and it was a beautiful day.

After a few hours John D. Warren, president of the Showmen's League, called the assemblage to order and delivered an address of welcome to the boys. He gave them a brief sketch of the good the league had done during the past year, the number of worthy ones it had helped out, the new members that had been taken in and the prospective condition of the league. While Mr. Warren is a quiet, unassuming man, he speaks with an earnestness that draws his audience closer to him. The next man on the program was Mr. Knight of Dallas, Texas, president of the state fair of that state, which has been famous for many years as one of the best. Mr. Knight has lived in Texas practically all his life and is master of a large fortune, besides being connected with the state fair. In fact he has been one of the foremost workers for many years. He told what the circus meant to him, as well as to thousands of others many years ago when they were boys and how they watched for car No. 1 of the circus to come and bill the town. When they would ask Mr. "Circus Man" when the show would arrive and when he told them not for three or

four weeks, they could not see how it was possible for them to wait so long. But they counted the days and even the nights until the arrival of the show. "In those days little did I think," he said, "that I would be a guest of the Showmen's League and be telling thousands of you tonight how I have always enjoyed the circus from my boyhood up. So far as circuses are concerned, I feel as though I were still a boy."

Clarence A. Wortham, known as "Little Giant," and who is also known as king of all street carnival outfits, who owns five high class carnivals and who visited Janesville last spring, was a late arrival at the club rooms. No one was received with warmer welcome than was Mr. Wortham. As for myself, I enjoyed the meeting and surely felt as though I was back in the days when I was a boy.

The famous old elephant "Toddles" is no more. "Toddles" died from eating too much frost-bitten sugarcane, and he would have been better off if he had taken the cane many years ago. He was one of the most dangerous animals in his time; had killed three or four people and so the world is better off without him. "Toddles" was once owned by Ringling Bros. who sold him to Big Otto. He then passed into the hand of the Selig Moving Picture Company of Los Angeles and was later owned by William P. Hall. He became very tame while with Mr. Henry's wagon show.

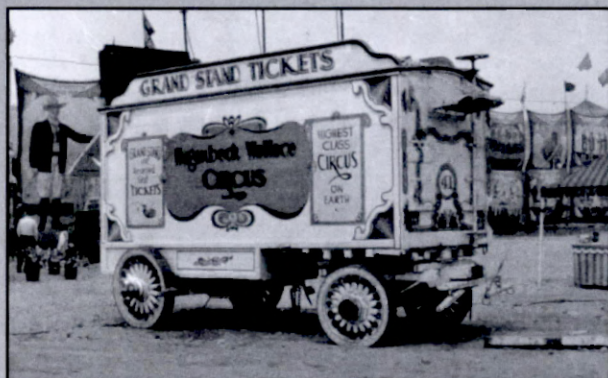
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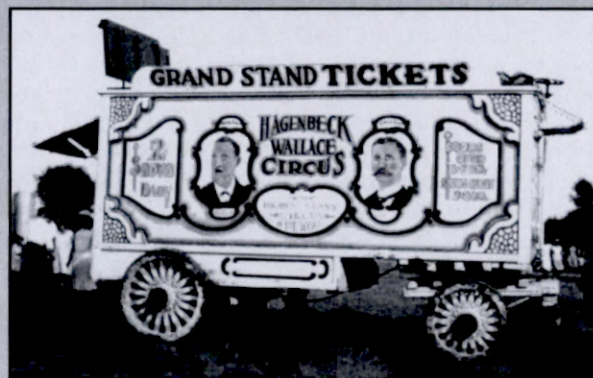
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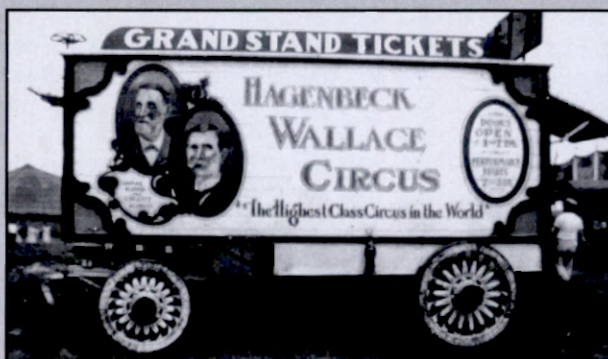
DIFFERENT FACES ON A Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus TICKET WAGON IN THE 1930s



1931



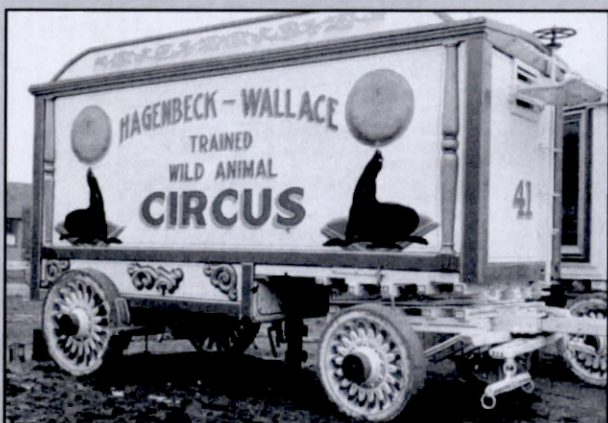
1932



1933



1935



1937



1938



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And
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BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Vol. 48, No. 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2004

FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

Bandwagon, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society, Inc. (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005-4968), is published bi-monthly by the Circus Historical Society, Inc., 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691. Periodicals Postage Paid at Columbus, OH. Postmaster: Send address changes to Bandwagon, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691.

Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$100, half page \$60, quarter page \$35. Minimum ad \$25.

Bandwagon, new membership and subscription rate: \$34.00 per year in the United States; \$39.00 per year outside United States. Single copies \$4.00 plus \$2 postage. Please direct all concerns regarding address changes and lack of delivery to the editor.

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The cover illustration is the Christmas card issued by Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus in 1943.

The stained glass window is in St. Martha's church in Sarasota, Florida. A circus mass is held in St. Martha's early in January of each year. The card was designed by Roland Butler.

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Please send the Editor any photos and information you have for the Season's Review that will appear in the March-April *Bandwagon*. Material on Bentley Bros. and any Mexican circuses is needed.

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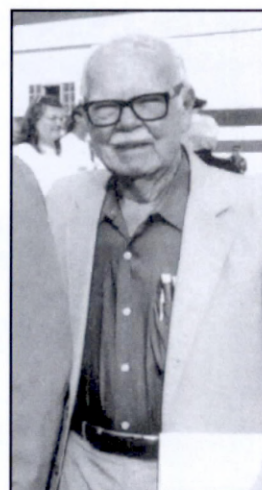
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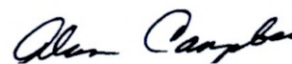
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